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Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 62/94 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/3.

The present report describes major humanitarian trends and challenges that have occurred during the past year and analyses two thematic issues of concern: the humanitarian implications of climate change and the humanitarian challenges related to the current global food trends. The report provides an overview of current key processes to improve humanitarian coordination and ends with recommendations for further strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 62/94 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/3.

II. Overview of humanitarian trends and challenges

2. During the reporting period the largest driver of disasters was the increased incidence and severity of extreme weather events, mostly associated with climate change. Nine out of every 10 disasters are now climate related. During the past year, the United Nations has issued an unprecedented 15 funding appeals for sudden-onset disasters, five more than the previous year. Fourteen of these were climate-related.

3. The humanitarian consequences of inter-State and intra-state conflicts remain high. Displacement continues to be a major source of concern. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that at the end of 2007 there were 11.4 million refugees worldwide, an estimated 26 million people displaced within their own country due to violence and persecution, and another 26 million displaced by hazard-related disasters. The figures include long-standing displaced populations in Colombia and Sri Lanka, as well as new population displacements in the Central African Republic, Chad, Iraq, Kenya, the Sudan and Somalia. In response to some of these needs, the 2008 humanitarian consolidated appeal reported that 25 million people would require humanitarian assistance at a cost of $3.8 billion.

4. Compounding the challenges of climate change and armed conflict are recent jumps in food and fuel prices which have led to violent protests in many countries. High food prices have the potential to sharply increase the incidence and depth of food insecurity. In addition to the estimated 800 million people suffering from hunger, the World Bank predicts that the food security crisis may push another 100 million people into poverty, thereby reversing progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in many countries. The crisis is having an immediate impact on the cost of humanitarian operations and will likely lead to significant additional demand for food, health and nutritional assistance, while the solutions lie in boosting investment in measures to enhance agricultural productivity. These dynamics indicate that global demand for humanitarian assistance, which is already considerable, is likely to increase in the coming decade.

A. Disasters associated with natural hazards

5. In 2007, the Centre for the Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters reported that 414 disasters associated with climate change caused over 16,000 deaths and affected more than 234 million people. Floods or storms were responsible for 86 per cent of all natural disaster deaths and 98 per cent of populations affected by natural disasters. Since 1987 climate-related disasters have increased by almost 90 per cent, while geological hazards have increased by nearly 40 per cent. Part of the increase, however, is attributed to better reporting.

6. Asia continued to be the region most affected by disasters associated with natural hazards. Eight of the 10 countries in the world with the highest number of reported disaster deaths were in Asia, with 4,234 killed in Bangladesh by cyclone Sidr in November 2007, and more than 3,000 fatalities from severe floods in Bangladesh, China, India and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In China, millions were affected by a major earthquake measuring 8.0 on the Richter Scale which struck Sichuan province on 12 May 2008. As of 27 May the official death toll had exceeded 67,000, an estimated 362,000 had been injured and over 45 million people were affected. In Myanmar, Cyclone Nargis, which struck on 2 May 2008, has caused widespread flooding and power failures and destroyed houses, roads and markets. Some 2.4 million people are believed to be severely affected and 1.4 million are in need of urgent assistance. As of 20 May the official death toll was almost 78,000 and an estimated 56,000 were reported missing. Humanitarian actors are concerned that if affected populations are not provided with immediate life-saving assistance, the population's suffering will further increase.

7. Unusually heavy rainfall in Africa, in November 2006-March 2007 and November 2007-March 2008, led to some of the worst and most widespread flooding in the continent's recorded history. Flooding in the eastern, central and western parts of Africa killed more than 200 people, displaced over 600,000 and affected millions. The Southern African region was the worst hit. Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia hardly had time to recover from the floods of late 2006-early 2007 before they were forced to face uncommonly early, torrential rainfall and consecutive cyclones in early 2008. Those caused widespread damage to infrastructure and crops, killed thousands of livestock and affected the lives of more than a million people. This was followed by severe drought conditions, felt particularly hard in Lesotho, Swaziland, southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

8. Major impacts of natural hazards were also felt in Latin America and the Caribbean. For the first time in recorded history, two Atlantic hurricanes, Dean and Felix, made landfall in the same season, during August-September 2007, affecting Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. In Bolivia and Ecuador continuous rains and flooding in March and April 2008 killed close to 100 and affected more than 700,000 people. In Bolivia, the authorities reported that some 90 per cent of key summer crops had been destroyed on land that remained underwater throughout the harvest season. In Ecuador, the flooding affected half the country's 13 provinces, triggering demands for assistance in basic services, early recovery and logistics.

9. Where they were prepared, affected communities and Governments were able to respond effectively to disasters. In Southern Africa and Asia the 2007/08 response to the rain and cyclone season saw significant improvements from previous years. Investment in early-warning systems and improved cooperation among Governments in managing the river systems have led to a dramatic decrease in the number of deaths. Preparedness measures, including contingency planning and pre-positioning of relief items, have contributed to a more timely and effective response. While in Mozambique floods of similar magnitude caused about 700 deaths in 2002, only 20 deaths were recorded in 2008. Deaths from Cyclone Sidr, which struck Bangladesh in late 2007, were far lower than the death toll in 1991 when a major cyclone killed 138,000 people. By contrast, the lack of disaster risk reduction and preparedness in Myanmar, for which Cyclone Nargis was a disaster of unprecedented magnitude, undoubtedly contributed to the very high death toll.

10. Where Governments needed and requested international assistance, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations were able and ready to respond. The United Nations issued a total of 20 flash appeals related to disasters in 2007/08, requesting a total of $712 million. Additionally, the United Nations deployed 15 United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams to help assess needs and coordinate humanitarian response.

B. Complex emergencies

11. The crisis in Darfur is now five years old, with no immediate end in sight. Almost 2.4 million people are displaced, most of whom are women and children. Sexual violence including rape remains a significant problem. Two thirds of the Darfur population require some form of humanitarian assistance. The world's largest aid operation, comprising more than 14,700 humanitarian workers, the vast majority of them Sudanese, struggles daily to cope with a difficult operating environment exacerbated by continued harassment, carjackings and targeted attacks. In Western Darfur more than 100,000 civilians were forced to flee from violence in the first few months of 2008, at a rate of 1,000 per day. Some 13,000 civilians fled into Chad in the largest single registered refugee movement in Darfur since 2004. The deterioration of the situation has highlighted the need for rapid deployment of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), while there are clear threats to the historic 2005 North-South peace agreement, which ended one of Africa's longest and bloodiest wars.

12. In Iraq ongoing violence and other aid delivery challenges are preventing millions from accessing essential services. The United Nations estimates that four million Iraqis are in urgent need of food assistance and only 40 per cent of the Iraqi population has reliable access to safe drinking water. One third of the population is cut off from essential health care and necessary medication and between 4 and 9 per cent of children under five are suffering from acute malnutrition. An estimated 2.2 million Iraqis (8 per cent of Iraq's population) have fled Iraq since 2003; another 2.5 million (9 per cent of the population) are estimated to be displaced within Iraq's borders. Syria hosts the bulk of Iraqi refugees (an estimated 1.5 million), followed by Jordan (450,000-500,000). Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon and Turkey host smaller populations of Iraqi refugees.

13. In Somalia the situation has deteriorated further. Two million people are expected to be in need of humanitarian assistance or livelihood support in 2008 — an increase of more than 50 per cent from 2007. Following an upsurge in violence between the Transitional Federal Government and anti-Government elements, the United Nations estimates that since 2007, 800,000 people have fled the fighting in Mogadishu, only to be confronted with crop failure, erratic rainfall, drought, record high food prices and malnutrition levels more than 15 per cent above emergency thresholds in the areas where they have settled. In Sri Lanka the escalation of the conflict has been marked by further bombings, killings, abductions, forced recruitment and arbitrary arrests and has displaced more than 308,000 people.

14. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the United Nations has been providing assistance to affected communities for six decades. Palestinian populations in the West Bank and Gaza as well as Israeli populations in Sderot and western Negev

continue to struggle with violence and economic restrictions. In Gaza, where close to 80 per cent of the population depends on humanitarian aid, the almost total lockdown of crossing points into the Gaza Strip since June 2007 has impeded the entry and distribution of humanitarian assistance and prevented commercial goods from entering and exiting markets. Severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods in the West Bank and Gaza have deeply affected commercial activities. The resulting economic stagnation has put nearly half of the population below the poverty line, in Gaza in particular. Civilians in Sderot and western Negev in Israel live in constant fear for their lives, as rockets and mortars continue to be fired indiscriminately from Gaza.

15. These long-standing emergencies were punctuated by political unrest in countries that had previously enjoyed relative stability. In Kenya, six weeks of rioting followed the announcement of results of the disputed presidential election in December 2007. More than 1,000 civilians were killed and 300,000 people displaced. In more than 30 countries violent riots and protests against the escalation of food prices could risk derailing critical development programmes.

16. Where the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have been able to respond to these complex emergencies, they have been effective at providing timely assistance to people in need. For example, United Nations agencies and partner organizations were able to provide safe water and sanitation to one million internally displaced persons in Somalia; cared for 240,000 Sudanese refugees and 180,000 internally displaced persons in eastern Chad; provided emergency job creation and cash assistance to 44,000 destitute families in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; delivered food to 4.1 million vulnerable Zimbabweans; distributed 12,535 blankets, 10,275 mats and 14,600 plastic sheets, to internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic; assisted 10,000 people displaced by civil strife in Timor-Leste; contained 131 epidemics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and drilled over 300 boreholes to provide water for war-affected people in Uganda.

17. However, in too many places humanitarian workers are denied access to needy populations and are attacked when trying to provide assistance. At a time of increasing humanitarian needs and a growing demand for humanitarian operations, the need for acceptance of and respect for the principles that underpin humanitarian action is greater than ever.

III. Humanitarian principles

18. Humanitarian action must be conducted in compliance with the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence as reaffirmed in General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 58/114. Humanitarian actors' adherence to these principles remains critical to ensure that humanitarian assistance can be provided fairly and wherever needed. Humanity emphasizes the need to prevent and alleviate human suffering and protect life and health while ensuring respect for the individual. Impartiality requires humanitarian actors to make no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class or political opinions in their operations, responding on the basis of humanitarian need alone. Neutrality precludes humanitarian actors from taking sides in conflicts or engaging in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. Independence requires humanitarian assistance to be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other

objectives. The effectiveness of humanitarian response depends on the acceptance and recognition of these principles by all relevant actors including the warring parties. Failure to apply these principles to humanitarian operations not only jeopardizes humanitarian activities, but may increase the risks for people affected by conflicts and hazard-related disasters as well as for humanitarian staff working to alleviate human suffering.

19. Humanitarian actors' access to populations in need and the ability of these populations to access assistance is a fundamental prerequisite for humanitarian operations. In complex emergencies, parties to armed conflict are expected to facilitate the safe passage of relief consignments in a rapid and timely manner. This is provided for in international humanitarian law and reiterated in several General Assembly resolutions.

20. However, access to life-saving assistance is often hindered by ongoing hostilities, restrictions on freedom of movement, banditry, looting of relief items, bureaucratic obstacles or overt obstruction of humanitarian activities. These constraints indicate lack of respect for humanitarian principles. The resulting failure to ensure rapid and unimpeded access to vulnerable populations deprives millions of civilians of much-needed relief. In Somalia the proliferation of roadblocks and checkpoints controlled by various armed actors and illegal taxation lead to significant delays in and increased costs of humanitarian assistance delivery. Increasing insecurity and overt threats to humanitarian workers made it a difficult and dangerous environment in which to operate. In Iraq, insecurity prevents international staff from supporting the provision of humanitarian assistance, while bureaucratic impediments exclude significant portions of the civilian population from basic services and assistance. The severe restriction of fuel imports into Gaza has led to the disruption of basic services and, on occasion, forced the suspension of food assistance to some 650,000 people.

21. Meanwhile, humanitarian workers are increasingly — and unacceptably — subject to deliberate violent attacks. Of growing concern are direct threats and physical assaults on humanitarian personnel by parties to conflict and criminal elements. The continued prevalence of such threats has direct implications for populations affected by conflict and in need of assistance. In Darfur, 273 security incidents were reported by non-governmental organizations in 2007,[1] including incidents in which 16 staff members suffered gunshot wounds. Robbery and banditry are of increasing concern, with car-jackings causing millions of dollars in losses and imposing severe limitations on aid groups' operational capacity. During the same period, 26 humanitarian premises were assaulted. In Afghanistan, during 2007, non-governmental organizations reported 135 security incidents, which included the killing of 15 staff members (4 international and 11 nationals), the abduction of 66 personnel and 65 armed attacks on humanitarian convoys.

22. In 2007, the Department for Safety and Security reported 520 violent attacks on United Nations personnel and the deaths of 16 staff members from malicious

[1] General Assembly resolution 60/123 called for further efforts to enhance security collaboration between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is working closely with the Department for Safety and Security and non-governmental organizations on staff security under the framework of "Saving Lives Together", a series of non-binding recommendations to enhance the security of humanitarian operations.

attacks in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Malawi, the Sudan, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Uganda. Locally recruited humanitarian and United Nations personnel remain particularly vulnerable and have suffered the majority of casualties, arrests and incidents of harassment. Fifteen of the 16 deaths reported by the Department for Safety and Security were of locally recruited staff. In Darfur and the Democratic Republic of the Congo access restrictions caused by safety and security concerns are compounded by ongoing fighting, the breakdown of chains of commands within armed movements and banditry, which jeopardize the safety and security of humanitarian actors. In Darfur, road banditry has increased by 350 per cent compared to 2007. In the first quarter of 2008, 96 vehicles were hijacked including three UNAMID vehicles and 60 trucks contracted by the World Food Programme (WFP). In April 2008 WFP was forced to reduce monthly food portions by 50 per cent. This will reduce the daily kilocalorie value of the ration by 40 per cent and prevent sufficient stocks of food relief from reaching needy populations. Governments are urged to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel operating within their borders. Public acknowledgment of their impartiality and their positive role is an important step in this direction.

23. A growing challenge to the application of humanitarian principles is the increasingly blurred distinction between military and humanitarian civilian actors. This is most evident in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, where humanitarian workers operate in close proximity with armed forces and military actors provide humanitarian aid. While the importance of civil-military communication and coordination channels is well recognized, it remains vital to the effectiveness of humanitarian operations that the distinction between humanitarian and military purposes and actors be strictly maintained. Within the United Nations, important steps have been taken to promote a unified system-wide response in complex emergencies while maintaining appropriate organizational and structural arrangements that allow humanitarian actors to work in a principled manner. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has developed a series of guidelines on the relationship and interaction between humanitarian and military actors such as the IASC reference paper on civil-military relationships in complex emergencies, the guidelines on the use of military and civil defence assets to support United Nations humanitarian activities in complex emergencies and the guidelines on the use of military and armed escorts for humanitarian convoys. The United Nations, in consultation with Member States and military actors, will continue its efforts to ensure that civil-military guidelines are broadly disseminated, well understood and respected by all actors involved.

24. Humanitarian actors must consistently distinguish themselves from other actors in the field. To this end, organizational and structural arrangements conducive to independent humanitarian action are a fundamental prerequisite where humanitarian actors are operating alongside political and peacekeeping missions. In this regard, United Nations humanitarian actors have continued to strengthen coordination with peacekeeping operations. Additionally, several codes of conduct have been developed to guide the behaviour of humanitarian actors in line with humanitarian principles. The Secretary-General's bulletin on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) provides an example of these codes. The bulletin reiterates the zero tolerance policy for abuse and exploitation and the humanitarian community's obligation to support the

victims. These guidelines must be continually reaffirmed and renewed in order to promote accountability to fundamental principles in the face of complex and evolving operational contexts.

IV. Emerging humanitarian challenges

25. The most notable humanitarian developments of the reporting period revolve around the humanitarian impact of climate change and of the global increase in food prices. These phenomena have led to increased humanitarian needs and pose unique challenges to response capacity.

A. Humanitarian implications of climate change: challenges for disaster risk reduction and preparedness

26. During the past 20 years, the number of recorded disasters has doubled from approximately 200 to more than 400 per year. Disasters caused by floods are more frequent (increasing from about 50 in 1985 to more than 200 in 2005) and damage larger areas than they did 20 years ago. What we are witnessing today should not be considered an aberration. Current trends indicate a future where extreme climate variability and its consequences are likely to become the norm.

27. The humanitarian implications are significant, including more frequent and intense storms and rising sea levels, both of which increase the risk of flooding. Nearly 634 million people — one tenth of the global population — live in at-risk coastal areas a few metres above existing sea levels, three quarters of which are located in the Asian flood-prone river deltas or in low-lying small island States. Almost two thirds of cities with populations greater than 5 million fall, at least partly, in low-lying flood-prone areas. Twenty-one per cent of the urban populations of least developed nations live in such environments.

28. Climate change will increase climatic extremes and the likelihood and geographic range of drought. It impacts agriculture production and food systems, thereby increasing the number of people at risk of hunger. In some African countries rainfall-fed agriculture is projected to halve by 2020 and desertification is engulfing larger areas of the Sahel region, owing in part to an increasingly arid climate, decreased rainfall and extended periods of drought. Many communities in the Sahel are dependent on land for agriculture and pastoralism; desertification and subsequent food insecurity will increase their vulnerability. Approximately 200 million people in Africa (25 per cent of the continent's population) currently do not have access to clean water. The number is expected to grow by 50 million by 2020 and to 400 million by 2050. In 1995, nearly 1.4 billion people (24 per cent of the global population) lived in high-stressed watersheds where water demand outstripped supply. By 2025, this figure is projected to rise to over 3 billion based on population growth alone.

29. Increased flooding is leading to higher rates of waterborne diseases, and rising temperatures have increased the likelihood of malaria epidemics in Africa. Unless protective measures are strengthened, climate change will expand the range of diseases such as dengue fever, exposing an additional 2 billion people to transmission by the 2080s. In 2000, the World Health Organization (WHO)

estimated that global warming was responsible for 150,000 deaths, as any increase in global temperature will increase fatalities. Climatic extremes may exacerbate the struggle for access to and control of scarce resources which could lead to population displacement and armed conflict. Given vulnerability patterns, droughts and floods will increase the risk of short-term, temporary migration. Climate change may also exacerbate longer-term migration trends associated with environmental degradation and desertification. This points to the need for strengthened protection mechanisms for disaster-affected populations, as well as improved coordination between humanitarian and development actors to reduce the potentially negative impact of longer-term migration trends.

30. Initial analyses of the links between climate change and increasing food prices are under way. At a time when global food stocks are at an all-time low, food supply could be further diminished by extreme weather events that trigger harvest failures and changes in weather and temperature that alter agricultural production patterns. In 2006/07 a year's worth of wheat was lost to drought in Australia, and cold weather caused grain crops to fail in Europe and the United States of America. Climate change may also impact food security, as changing crop yields may continue to drive up prices for basic food commodities in food-importing countries.

31. The immediate challenge posed to humanitarian organizations by climate change is how to prepare for and respond to these more frequent and intense climatic events. There is an urgent need to increase investment in disaster risk reduction and preparedness in high-risk settings and to mobilize support for addressing the humanitarian impacts of climate change. In the immediate future, these efforts must focus on risk areas such as storms, floods and droughts, while taking into account the longer-term impacts such as rising sea levels. Data and analysis of the humanitarian implications of climate change remain in their early stages. Humanitarian actors are increasingly engaging with the World Meteorological Organization and climate scientists to see how current national and regional climate modelling and weather forecasting can best be incorporated into early warning systems and used to improve disaster preparedness and response. Governments are encouraged to strengthen their preparedness for disasters, in particular their legal frameworks, including through the implementation of the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance, adopted by the thirtieth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 2007.

32. While increasing the humanitarian community's knowledge of hazards is critical, improving the understanding of how climate hazards affect existing patterns of vulnerability and risk is equally important. For this reason, humanitarian actors are increasingly considering how risk profiles and tools can be updated to provide a more comprehensive analysis of vulnerability caused by climate change. Factors such as changes in morbidity patterns, access to food and water, urbanization, capacity of current infrastructure and potential migration patterns are central components of the analysis. Progress on this issue was the development of the Bali Action Plan agreed at the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference. The plan emphasized the need for improved vulnerability assessments, capacity-building, response strategies, insurance and disaster risk reduction strategies, as well as closer consideration of the specific needs of African countries affected by drought, desertification and floods.

B. Humanitarian implications of global food trends

33. A substantial increase in food commodity prices combined with diminishing food stocks is having a major impact on food security and humanitarian aid globally. Since mid-2007, United Nations agencies have reported food commodity cost increases ranging from 30 to 130 per cent. Drivers of increasing prices can be divided into demand-related and supply-related factors. Demand-related factors include global population growth and changing food consumption patterns, often towards diets richer in meat and dairy. A large increase in biofuel production has led to increased demand for commodities such as maize and palm oil. Preliminary evidence indicates that strategies of institutional investors in commodity markets may also be contributing to higher prices and price fluctuations. An important supply-related driver is the fact that the world's food reserve stocks have dwindled to their lowest level in 30 years, because of a belief that food would remain plentiful and available at a relatively low price. Increased costs of fertilizer and fuel have also contributed to rising food prices.

34. Preliminary predictions indicate that current food trends will create serious humanitarian challenges in the immediate, medium and long terms. The most alarming immediate consequence is the increased incidence of social and political food-related unrest in a large number of countries, which, as already observed in 2008, has the potential for political instability. This risk is particularly high in countries emerging from violent conflict, where fragile security, political and economic progress is easily derailed. In some cases, United Nations stabilization efforts could be undermined, as peacekeeping missions come under pressure to support Government efforts to quell riots and humanitarian staff and their facilities become targets. Apart from the immediate security response, urgent efforts are needed to monitor food markets and prices (especially in urban areas), factor food-related unrest into conflict early warning systems and integrate food security into peacebuilding and contingency plans.

35. Meanwhile, food assistance has become more expensive. To maintain current levels, additional funds are being needed to cover food and transport costs. WFP recently requested an additional $755 million to meet the cost of its already assessed projects for 2008. While the response to this appeal has been generous, significant extra resources are likely to be required as many of those who depend on external food assistance may face a reduction of rations.

36. National reactions to food price hikes vary. Most food-importing countries have reduced or eliminated import tariffs and taxes, an action whose fiscal implications still need to be assessed. Budget cuts affecting Government development programmes could have long-term consequences for food security and poverty. Many food-exporting countries have imposed export tariffs and quotas to reduce domestic prices, or banned exports altogether. A few countries are making purchases to replenish stockpiles and strategic reserves, while others are increasing subsidy levels or examining the possibility of rationing. Governments should be cautious to avoid the possible impacts of such policies including their potential to exacerbate shortages, further raise prices in importing countries or reduce production incentives.

37. Finally, one of the most serious challenges may be a greater incidence and depth of food insecurity, requiring emergency interventions. While anecdotal

evidence is emerging from developing regions about the impact of higher food prices on people, there are no global estimates yet of how many people may become hungry. Though it is difficult to establish thresholds for food insecurity and account for coping strategies, there are multiple signs of distress on the part of the poorest households — which are mostly female-headed — such as selling assets, eating less and eating worse. The United Nations system must urgently improve needs assessments and vulnerability analysis while working with Governments to develop effective safety nets (in the form of food, vouchers or cash transfers; school feeding, employment and nutrition programmes; insurance schemes, etc.) to protect vulnerable populations.

38. At the national level, Governments need to dedicate more resources to boosting agricultural production and strengthening social safety net programmes to stabilize the provision of food and nutritional support, health care and emergency education. Safety nets can mitigate the long-term impact of food price increases such as malnutrition, prevent distress asset sales and allow increased investment in health and education. Measures, including local procurement of food supplies and cash transfers, should be established to help Governments and food agencies to boost their emergency operational capacity. These national-level programmes should be underpinned by market analysis to ensure that local procurement and cash transfers do not make food even more inaccessible to the poorest groups who fall beyond safety-net coverage.

39. It remains imperative that Governments, communities and international agencies become better equipped to provide longer-term solutions to new patterns of hunger. This will require strengthened United Nations coherence and partnerships with Governments to enhance national capacities to address hunger and ensure food security. Food and agriculture agencies are taking steps to mitigate the implications of cost increases, including by purchasing food commodities in local and regional markets. WFP is currently purchasing 80 per cent of its food supplies from developing countries to reduce delivery costs and support local economies. However, there is an increasing risk that further expansion in local purchases may be impeded by the export bans imposed in many countries. At the global policy level, additional resources must be allocated to research the implications this trend and find ways to mitigate its adverse impacts at all levels.

40. Given the urgent need for action and policy support at the global and country levels, an international strategy is needed that outlines coherent and coordinated responses to rising food prices. In May 2008, the Secretary-General established a high-level task force on the global food security crisis, which comprises relevant United Nations agencies and Bretton Woods institutions. The task force will aim to develop a comprehensive framework for action that defines common strategies in support of authorities and affected populations. The response will include key immediate and long-term actions, policies and resources and address a wide range of food security issues. Humanitarian actors will play a central role, particularly in the short term.

V. Ongoing challenges

A. Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance

41. In 2006 the United Nations launched a series of initiatives aiming to further enhance the coordination of its emergency humanitarian response by increasing capacity, capability, predictability, accountability and equity in humanitarian action. These initiatives focused on four areas: capacity and coordination in the field; leadership; partnerships; and predictable and equitable humanitarian financing.

Capacity and coordination in the field

42. Capacity and coordination in the field were strengthened through the implementation of the cluster approach,[2] which was developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to address identified response gaps. Under the cluster approach, thematic leads have been designated for areas that previously had no clear lead organization. The approach has contributed to enhanced coordination, decision-making and partnerships among humanitarian actors, both in the field and globally.

43. During the reporting period, the cluster approach has been implemented in 12 out of 26 countries where resident and humanitarian coordinators are in place. This number will increase in 2008 as more coordinators introduce the cluster approach to improve coordination in preparedness exercises and ongoing emergency response operations. In Pakistan and Mozambique the approach was used for the second time in response to floods. The cluster approach was immediately implemented in Myanmar following Cyclone Nargis. An independent evaluation conducted in 2007 indicated that clusters have successfully addressed response gaps and improved strategic planning and preparedness at the field level. The evaluation, however, identified the need to better mainstream gender, HIV/AIDS, environmental concerns and early recovery and to strengthen the clusters' accountability to stakeholders, including national Governments and beneficiaries. To further support the global humanitarian response capacity, an appeal was launched in 2007 requesting $63 million. To date, only 53 per cent of that amount has been raised.

Enhanced humanitarian coordination: the resident and humanitarian coordinator system

44. More effective humanitarian leadership at the field level — whether the function is performed by resident or humanitarian coordinators — is critical to an enhanced and accountable humanitarian response. Effective humanitarian coordination requires qualified individuals who provide leadership during humanitarian emergencies. Efforts to strengthen this function face the following challenges: the pool of potential humanitarian coordinators is narrow; opportunities for coordinators to share experiences and best practices are limited; and the accountability framework for humanitarian coordinators requires further development.

[2] The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is not taking part in the cluster approach. Nevertheless, coordination between ICRC and the United Nations will continue to the extent necessary to achieve efficient operational complementary and strengthened response for people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.

45. To address these weaknesses, in 2007 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee developed and began to implement a three-year work plan. The progress achieved includes: a standardized induction programme for newly appointed humanitarian coordinators; enhanced accountability through better identification of joint humanitarian priorities between the Emergency Relief Coordinator and humanitarian coordinators; and a mentoring system for newly appointed humanitarian coordinators. Additional system-wide efforts are ongoing to strengthen performance appraisals for humanitarian coordinators.

Predictability of response: humanitarian financing

46. Strengthened leadership capacity should be supported by sufficient and flexible funding to meet urgent humanitarian needs. The humanitarian system has established several mechanisms to improve the speed, equity and predictability of humanitarian financing. These humanitarian "pooled funds" comprise the Central Emergency Response Fund at the global level and the common humanitarian funds and emergency response funds at the field level. Complemented by a strong Consolidated Appeal Process that allows for the identification and prioritization of humanitarian needs by all stakeholders, these funding mechanisms can be highly effective in facilitating rapid and needs-based humanitarian response.

47. Pooled funding mechanisms have seen significant success. Donors have pledged $1.1 billion to the Central Emergency Response Fund since its inception. During two years of operation, the Fund has committed $708.9 million to 879 projects in 60 countries. A two-year evaluation of the Fund — as mandated by the General Assembly — is currently under way. The Secretary-General will report on the evaluation findings to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. Donors have committed $330 million to the common humanitarian fund in the Sudan, and nearly $300 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During 2008, common humanitarian funds will be established in Ethiopia and the Central African Republic. While these funds have provided humanitarian/resident coordinators with tools to enhance humanitarian coordination and allocate funds based on needs, additional efforts are still required to improve prioritization and allocation of resources. A series of efforts — including training, coaching and enhanced guidelines — has been undertaken to improve the decision-making processes. Developing improved performance and accountability frameworks, in addition to needs analysis frameworks and tools, will enhance the use of these funds.

Equity and accountability of response: enhancing needs assessments

48. A common analytical framework that allows humanitarian stakeholders to jointly determine humanitarian needs and priorities is important to ensuring timely, accountable and equitable provision of humanitarian assistance. In consultation with other United Nations partners, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has begun a mapping of ongoing assessment initiatives in an effort to develop a global needs assessment framework that provides for the joint collection and use of data. This framework will include definitions, key indicators, information management mechanisms and data collection methodologies that can be used by humanitarian actors, donors and Governments.

Partnerships

49. The Global Humanitarian Platform brings together humanitarian organizations from within and outside the United Nations system to identify ways to strengthen humanitarian partnerships. Its goal is to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of humanitarian assistance and strengthen the capacity of local non-governmental organizations. At its second meeting, in 2007, the Platform endorsed the principles of partnership, namely equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. At its next meeting, to be held in July 2008, the Platform will discuss how the principles are being translated into practice, for example in the context of the current rise in global food prices.

B. Foreign military assets in disaster relief

50. During the reporting period and at the request of Member States, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs commissioned an independent study on the use of foreign military assets in disaster relief. Completed in late 2007 and launched in early 2008, the study reported that foreign military assets are a common feature of major international disaster relief operations. The findings of the study indicate that while humanitarian relief is — and should remain — a predominantly civilian function, foreign military assets can play a valuable role in disaster relief operations. Given the predictions about the impact of climate change, the use of foreign military assets may increase in the future.

51. The study defined foreign military assets as military personnel, equipment and services provided by Governments with the consent of the affected State for major international disaster relief assistance. The study found that air transport was the most frequently deployed asset, followed by medical support and expert personnel for civil-military coordination, needs assessments and logistics. The study identified FMA contributors as mostly countries in North America and Europe, who provided assistance to distant and neighbouring countries, while many countries in most regions had contributed FMA to assist their neighbours in disaster relief.

52. Following a major hazard event, several factors will influence a Government's decision to request or offer military assistance: the scale and humanitarian impact of the disaster; the level of preparedness of the affected country; countries' policies on accepting military assets or making them available for disaster relief; national interests; and diplomatic and historic relations. Countries affected by natural disasters usually turn first to their neighbours for assistance because of the proximity of their assets and a likely understanding of their operational context. Most deployments of foreign military assets in disaster relief are a result of direct, bilateral negotiations between Governments or their national militaries, based on established relationships, though a few countries have policies against the deployment of foreign forces on their territories for various reasons. Regional multilateral frameworks and other methods of coordinating the deployment and use of military assets have recently been explored, such as the Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency. Foreign military assets are rarely provided through the United Nations.

53. The study found that bilateral channelling of military assets led to a lack of coordination and occasionally overloaded the affected country's ability to use the

assets effectively. Regarding the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the study recommended a review of its coordination role with a view to identifying ways in which it can add value to what is likely to remain a system dominated by bilateral relationships. For example, the Office might help Governments' management of foreign military assets by improving the ability of resident/humanitarian coordinators to assist Governments in determining the need for such assets and their effective use. UNDAC teams might include more civil-military liaison experts, and military actors might be invited to participate in joint humanitarian needs assessments. A reassessment of the central register of military and civil defence assets is another concrete step that might be taken in this regard.

54. The study reaffirmed the need for Governments to deploy foreign military assets in an effective and principled manner and the importance of existing international guidelines on this issue, particularly the Oslo Guidelines adopted in 1994 and updated in 2006, which it identified as the international normative and practical framework for the use of foreign military assets in disaster response. The Oslo Guidelines stipulate that all humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the core principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and with full respect for the sovereignty of States. They reiterate that assistance should be based on actual needs and delivered by impartial and neutral actors, ensuring access to vulnerable populations and contributing to their safety. The study acknowledges that adherence to the Guidelines becomes particularly important when international disaster response is required in a complex emergency.

55. The study identified a considerable lack of awareness of the Guidelines among the different stakeholders and an uneven application of the Guidelines, particularly the concept of "last resort" which stipulates that military assets should be requested only when there is no comparable civilian alternative and when it meets a critical humanitarian need. The military assets must therefore be unique in capability and availability. There continues to be disagreement among Governments and humanitarian actors about how to balance the unique capabilities of military assets against the cost burdens, potential militarization of the situation and the effects of the presence of foreign troops on humanitarian actors' ability to operate. The study highlighted the need to raise awareness of the Oslo Guidelines more widely and to ensure that civilian and military actors discuss lessons and best practices following individual disaster relief operations. The experience following Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, where the Government declined all offers of foreign military assets despite the dramatic urgency of the situation, illustrates that this remains a very sensitive area.

Effectiveness of using foreign military assets in disaster response

56. In assessing the effectiveness of foreign military assets, the study highlighted that the timeliness of deploying them and making them operational appears to be the major factor. This depends on the availability of assets, the proximity of the provider, the reliability of information and bureaucratic processes. Poor information sharing and lack of clarity over status-of-forces agreements can cause significant delays. Clear national policies and the development of standing agreements between the contributing country and the agency coordinating the relief effort can significantly minimize the delay between the signing of any status-of-forces agreement, dispatch and operation.

57. The appropriateness of foreign military assets to the tasks at hand was also highlighted. Comprehensive, unified needs assessments and coordination frameworks could potentially ensure that appropriate military assets are provided. The length of deployment of foreign military assets, the sustainability of their relief efforts, perceptions and the nature of the emergency situation are additional factors that define their appropriateness. The efficiency with which foreign military assets operate and complement the relief effort; the absorptive capacity of the affected country, its ability to accommodate and effectively use foreign military and other disaster relief assets; and the coordination of the relief effort, including between civilian and military assets, are elements further impacting the effectiveness of foreign military assets.

58. The cost-effectiveness of foreign military assets is a source of concern for provider Governments who believe them to be costly and for humanitarian actors who fear the burden of the assets' costs on humanitarian funding. The Oslo Guidelines stipulate that the costs of deploying foreign military assets should not be borne by the affected Government and should be provided independently of funds earmarked for humanitarian relief assistance. The costs associated with foreign military assets are not readily available. It is, therefore, difficult to determine the effects of foreign military assets on humanitarian aid budgets. Several providers have introduced internal measures to ensure that the costs incurred in providing foreign military assets do not impact humanitarian funding sources. Cost-effectiveness is not only an inappropriate criterion to assess the efficacy of foreign military assets, but may also be a difficult factor given that costs are incomparable and may not be borne by humanitarian organizations. Furthermore, cost-effectiveness is a difficult argument to make when lives are at stake.

59. Measuring the effectiveness of the deployment, use and disengagement of foreign military assets in disaster relief depends upon the interplay of all the above factors. The decision to deploy military assets and the selection of the methods and types of assets to be deployed should be primarily based on humanitarian principles, identified humanitarian needs, the interests of the affected country and communities and the added value of foreign military assets to the overall relief effort.

C. Integrating a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance: review of the 1999 policy statement of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

60. The significance of mainstreaming gender equality in humanitarian operations to ensure a more effective response has been increasingly recognized by policymakers and practitioners. In 2006, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee launched a five-point strategic plan guided by its 1999 gender policy statement, subsequently leading to an updated Committee policy on gender equality in humanitarian action which was endorsed in May 2008. Additionally, the coalition "United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Crisis" was launched in 2007 to harmonize the United Nations system's response to sexual violence in emergencies. It comprises 12 United Nations entities and supports field-level activities in several countries, including the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

61. The 2007 IASC gender policy review indicated that progress has been achieved. For example, a gender handbook was published to guide humanitarian

actors in ensuring that the different needs of women, girls, boys and men are addressed. Eleven gender advisors have been deployed to the field as part of a newly created gender capacity roster to support gender mainstreaming in country-level programming. Preliminary evaluations indicate that gender capacity rosters can significantly improve humanitarian response.

62. The policy review called for enhanced coordination among humanitarian actors in gender equality programming, including ensuring the equal participation of women, girls, boys and men in all aspects of humanitarian response. It is also fundamental to gender equality to ensure that women and girls are provided with equal opportunities for capacity-building and employment. It is imperative that humanitarian actors report sex- and age-disaggregated data to better inform decision-making, and that accountability mechanisms for mainstreaming gender equality be strengthened.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

63. Member States and humanitarian actors, both within and outside the United Nations system, are faced with complex challenges that suggest increasing demand for humanitarian assistance. Trends such as the increased incidence of climate-related disasters and the continued rise in global food prices are likely to increase communities' vulnerability. These trends require strengthened humanitarian response with enhanced coordination at all levels, as well as greater respect by all stakeholders of the humanitarian principles that underpin humanitarian assistance.

64. On the basis of the above, Member States are encouraged to consider the following:

(a) All actors engaged in the response to complex emergencies and natural disasters should be strongly urged to promote greater respect for the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;

(b) Access to vulnerable populations and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel should be recognized as prerequisites for effective humanitarian response. States are urged to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian personnel and relief consignments to populations in need;

(c) Appropriate steps need to be taken by the authorities concerned to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel operating within their borders. Authorities should refrain from public statements that jeopardize the safety and security of humanitarian workers;

(d) Risk reduction and preparedness measures against disasters should be developed and strengthened at all levels, in coordination with relevant actors and in accordance with priority five of the Hyogo Framework for Action[3] (preparedness for response);

(e) Member States and regional organizations are encouraged to strengthen operational and legal frameworks for international disaster relief through the continued implementation of internationally recognized guidelines, including the

[3] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution II.

Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance;

(f) Greater efforts are required to intensify research to improve empirical data and analysis, in order to better understand the humanitarian consequences of climate change;

(g) The work of the Secretary-General's high-level task force on the global food security crisis should be strongly supported, so as to improve access to food by vulnerable populations, in particular children, enhance agriculture productivity and strengthen the development of food market monitoring systems;

(h) Increased resources need to be made available to meet current global humanitarian challenges such as climate change and increasing food prices. Humanitarian funding mechanisms such as the Central Emergency Response Fund, common humanitarian funds and emergency response funds could usefully be utilized in order to ensure predictable, timely and needs-based access to resources;

(i) The provision of military assets for disaster relief, based on humanitarian considerations, in accordance with the Oslo Guidelines and in full respect of the humanitarian principles, is encouraged. It should be ensured that internationally recognized guidelines on civil-military coordination such as the Oslo Guidelines are broadly disseminated, including through improved training;

(j) The United Nations and humanitarian partners should ensure that all aspects of humanitarian response address equally the needs of women, girls, men and boys, including through the improved collection, analysis and reporting of sex and age disaggregated data.

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United Nations research and training institutes

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report focuses on the financial implications of or cost estimate for the core training activities of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), known as core diplomatic training, as opposed to the Institute's training and capacity-development activities in fields unrelated to diplomatic training. Through its core diplomatic training activities, UNITAR trains diplomats at major United Nations locations to perform effectively in a multilateral context.

The financial evidence provided in the present report confirms that core diplomatic training is chronically underfunded, despite the solid financial footing of the Institute overall, the constant and growing need for such training and efforts to raise funds for that activity through special project grants. Indeed, while a greater number of Member States are requesting the services of UNITAR for remunerated diplomatic training for their country officials, a decreasing number are contributing to the Institute through voluntary contributions, which ensure that multilateral training relating to diplomacy can continue to be offered in a multilateral setting. The funding of earmarked projects, or UNITAR special purpose grant programmes, for activities not related to core diplomatic training continues to increase satisfactorily, with a 75 per cent increase between the bienniums 2002-2003 and 2004-2005. By contrast, since the late 1980s, the Institute has witnessed a progressive decline in voluntary contributions, which currently represent only 2.4 per cent of its total budget.

* E/2008/100.

** The present document was submitted late owing to late clearance from the Secretariat.

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The universal character of core diplomatic training is both its principal strength and its principal weakness. All Member States have access to and may benefit equally from such training. As it is a universal service, the burden of covering a portion of the costs involved must fall on the collective membership of the United Nations. Given the negative impact that ending core diplomatic training would have on the overall performance of diplomats, in particular those from developing and the least developed countries, in carrying out in their multilateral duties, the Secretary-General recommends that an annual subvention of $600,000, representing half of the costs for such training, be granted to the Institute from the United Nations regular budget to cover costs relating to it. This recommendation reaffirms the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session (A/62/377), in which he also called upon the Fifth Committee to reconsider the issue of financing the core training activities of UNITAR from the United Nations regular budget.

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 62/210, in which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2008 a report on the implementation of that resolution, including details on its financial implications, and the status of contributions to and the financial situation of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

2. The present report is considered a special report; henceforth all reporting on UNITAR will take place on a biennial basis beginning in 2009. In compliance with paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 62/210, future reports of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the Institute will be consolidated; the new consolidated report of the Secretary-General will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council rather than to the General Assembly; and a biennial reporting cycle will be established starting from 2009.

3. The focus of the present report pertains to paragraph 9 of resolution 62/210, which refers to more predictable and adequate support from Member States, in particular for the core training activities of the Institute, known as core diplomatic training. These activities are distinct from the Institute's training and capacity-development activities in other fields, which have a much wider target audience and encompass broader thematic areas than that of multilateral diplomacy.

4. As noted by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly (A/62/377, para. 4), to date UNITAR is totally self-funded and does not receive contributions from the United Nations regular budget for its activities. The level of the voluntary contributions to the General Fund remains very low, however, putting at risk the core diplomatic training of the Institute.

5. In paragraph 47 of that report, the Secretary-General recommended that, as a first priority, the Fifth Committee should reconsider the issue of financing UNITAR core diplomatic training from the United Nations regular budget. He also recommended that, in parallel, Member States should commit to increasing or resuming their contributions to the Institute.

6. Section II of the present report explains the particularities of the core diplomatic training activities of the Institute. It describes the unique character of that form of training; provides information on the increasing demand for it; outlines the complexities of funding such a universal service; and explains what the impact would be if the service were no longer offered to diplomats.

7. Section III examines the implementation costs of core diplomatic training and the financial implications involved in maintaining the service. It outlines the comprehensive financial situation of UNITAR, including the levels of voluntary contributions to the Institute; provides details about how core diplomatic training has been supported thus far and the actual expenditures incurred in the previous biennium and forecasted expenditures for the current and future bienniums; and presents a cost/benefit analysis of such training, the costs per beneficiary and a market survey of comparable services offered outside the United Nations context. Further, it sets out the positive and negative aspects of options other than recourse to the United Nations regular budget, most notably that of a fee-based system.

8. The report does not include a description of the activities designed and conducted by the Institute since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session (A/62/377). A complete report on the activities of UNITAR will be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council in 2009.

II. Core diplomatic training

9. Since 1965, UNITAR has been tasked with increasing the efficiency of the United Nations through training and capacity development in the areas of maintaining peace and security and promoting social and economic development. In line with its present strategic reforms, endorsed in the report of the Secretary-General and by the Board of Trustees of UNITAR on 7 December 2007, the Institute is moulding itself into a centre of excellence as measured by international standards and is recognized within and outside the United Nations system for standard-setting methodologies, high-quality training and research capacity on knowledge systems.

10. UNITAR plays a special role within the United Nations system as an autonomous body and as the principal learning institute for Member States. Anchored by United Nations priorities, it maintains a degree of flexibility in order to provide timely response to the capacity-building needs of Member States. Core diplomatic training relates to international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy and is traditionally considered the core training activity of the Institute. Core diplomatic training accounts for 5.5 per cent of the 80,000 people trained each year, who include Government officials and representatives of international and regional organizations, local authorities, civil society, the private sector and academia.

11. In total, about 4,000 diplomats posted at United Nations locations, including United Nations Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, benefited from core diplomatic training in 2006-2007. Training activities offered included orientation courses on the United Nations system and its functioning; briefings on the General Assembly and its Main Committees, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council; and workshops on the drafting of United Nations resolutions, negotiation and mediation, multilateral conference diplomacy, the chairing of international conferences, effective interventions, public speaking and presentation skills, United Nations elections processes and procedures, the undertaking of treaty actions and the retrieval and use of United Nations documentation.

12. The Institute systematically evaluates core diplomatic training activities through questionnaires to obtain immediate and direct feedback from the beneficiaries. In 2007, data from evaluations conducted on core diplomatic training activities indicated that 83 per cent of beneficiaries considered that the objectives of their training had been met; 96 per cent confirmed the relevance of the activity to their professional duties; and 98 per cent responded that they would recommend similar training to their colleagues.

13. Many core diplomatic training activities are implemented in partnership with other bodies of the United Nations system, in line with the priorities reflected in General Assembly resolutions 60/213 and 62/210, which, inter alia, reaffirmed the

importance of a coordinated United Nations system-wide approach to research and training and the relevance of training-related research activities.

14. While the Institute continues to respond to the needs of developing countries, as outlined in its statute, the actual beneficiaries of core diplomatic training are both developing and developed countries, with a ratio close to 3:2 of developing to developed country participants in 2006-2007.

15. There is a steady increase in demand by all Member States for high-quality, practice-oriented core diplomatic training. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 60/213, the General Assembly encouraged UNITAR to extend such training to cities hosting regional commissions.

16. This demand is separate from the bilateral requests from Member States for diplomatic training from the Institute. In 2006-2007, UNITAR received more than 30 requests from Member States for such training at the country level, principally for officials of ministries of foreign affairs in their respective capitals. Those requests bear testimony to the quality of the Institute's activities and the increasing demand for diplomatic training. However, such requests are independent of those for core diplomatic training, as they are not made in an open multilateral context.

17. While a greater number of Member States are requesting the services of UNITAR for remunerated diplomacy training for their country officials, a decreasing number are contributing to the Institute through voluntary contributions, which ensure that multilateral training on diplomacy can continue to be offered in a multilateral setting.

18. The universal character of core diplomatic training is both its principal strength and its principal weakness. Core diplomatic training is a universal service accessible to all diplomats where it is offered: one country's use of core diplomatic training does not preclude other Member States from enjoying its benefits. In 2006-2007, 186 Member States — close to 97 per cent of the total membership of the United Nations — benefited from core diplomatic training. By definition, core diplomatic training implies multilateral training offered in a multilateral context. All Member States, and the United Nations collectively, benefit from knowing more about how to operate in a multilateral setting and perform effectively and efficiently. Much of the experience of core diplomatic training involves learning together within a global student body of fellow diplomats.

19. It can safely be assumed that, without core diplomatic training, many diplomats would find themselves with fewer opportunities to gain the awareness, knowledge and skills base that are essential if they are to perform effectively in the working environment of the United Nations. Such a situation would have a negative impact on most Member States, and in particular the developing and least developed countries.

III. Financial situation of the Institute and cost estimate for core diplomatic training

20. To date, UNITAR is totally self-funded and does not receive any contributions from the United Nations regular budget for its activities.[1] With a current biennial budget of $36 million, UNITAR has the second largest annual budget in the family of United Nations training and research institutes.

21. The funding of earmarked projects, or UNITAR special purpose grant programmes, for activities not related to core diplomatic training continues to increase satisfactorily. For instance, there was a 75 per cent increase between 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 owing to increased contributions for special purpose grants from Member States and the private sector. Similarly, the increase since the previous biennium is expected to be at least 26 per cent. These significant increases reflect the overall satisfaction of Member States with the Institute's performance and its ability to deliver high-quality training and capacity-development services.

22. The critical financial situation with regard to core diplomatic training, however, contrasts starkly with the overall solid financial footing of the Institute. As indicated in the statute of the Institute, the costs of implementing core diplomatic training have traditionally been covered by non-earmarked voluntary contributions from Member States. Since the late 1980s, the Institute has witnessed a progressive decline in voluntary contributions. The current level of such contributions represents only 2.4 per cent of the total budget of the Institute.

23. Given the decreasing levels of voluntary contributions, the Institute has been able to sustain core diplomatic training only on a deficit basis, resorting to covering a portion of its costs through the programme support charged to special purpose grants not related to core diplomatic training. While donors contributing to special purpose grant projects not related to core diplomatic training accept the use of programme support funds for the general administration of the Institute, such funds should not be used for financing upwards of 30 per cent of core diplomatic training activities, as they have been in the past. Since 2007, the Institute's leadership has introduced more transparent accounting for all special purpose grants, which makes the old approach unsustainable.

24. The issue of the viability of core diplomatic training was raised in the Second Committee in 2007, following the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General, which indicated that the very low level of voluntary contributions to the General Fund puts at risk the core training programmes of the Institute (A/62/377, para. 4). In its resolution 62/210, the General Assembly called for more predictable and adequate support for core diplomatic training.

25. Since 1994, the Board of Auditors has called upon the Institute to strengthen its fund-raising strategy in order to improve the volume of voluntary contributions. The Institute has responded to such requests in a number of ways, including through extensive and intensive bilateral and multilateral contacts with Member States over

[1] In 2003, by its resolution 58/272, the General Assembly decided to cancel the debt of UNITAR in respect of rent and maintenance charges in the amount of $321,184 for the period up until 2002. Further, in its resolution 60/248, the General Assembly provided a one-off subvention to the Institute in the amount of $242,400 to cover past rental rates, maintenance and other administrative costs.

the years. Furthermore, since 2006-2007, the Institute has adopted an aggressive fund-raising strategy to secure special purpose grants for the purpose of carrying out core diplomatic training activities. In the previous biennium, the Institute was successful in securing almost $600,000 in special purpose grants for such activities. It is worth noting, however, that those monies were provided through private sector contributions and not by Member States. The Institute expects to generate a similar amount in special purpose grants for core diplomatic training from similar sources in the years to come.

26. The total budget for core diplomatic training in 2006-2007 was $2,070,000. Voluntary contributions from the General Fund were used to pay for 41 per cent of the costs of core diplomatic training. An additional 29 per cent was paid for through the special purpose grants referred to in paragraph 25 above. The shortfall of 30 per cent was covered by the support funds generated by special purpose grants not related to core diplomatic training, a practice that will have to come to an end in the current biennium (see para. 23 above).

27. The total expected cost of core diplomatic training for 2008-2009 is $2,400,000. Voluntary contributions to cover the costs of such training for that period are expected to reach $600,000. An additional $600,000 is expected to be generated by special purpose grants for core diplomatic training activities. The shortfall for 2008-2009 will therefore be in the amount of $1,200,000. This trend is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future unless Member States request UNITAR to increase the number of locations where core diplomatic training is provided.

28. The average cost of core diplomatic training per participant per activity is highly competitive. The average daily rate for core diplomatic training by the Institute is $170 per participant per activity. A broad-brush market survey of other training courses in related fields offered by the private sector at major United Nations locations reveals that the average costs of capacity-building workshops per day range from $360 to $1,033.

29. While pricing on comparable services is useful, it is worth considering the unique character of the core diplomatic training provided by UNITAR. Indeed, no other entity offers comprehensive training on the United Nations, for the United Nations and by the United Nations, and it could be argued that no non-United Nations entity is in a position to do so. In terms of other United Nations training institutes, none has a training mandate which focuses on Member States and the full range of topics addressed through the work of UNITAR.

30. The Board of Auditors has encouraged the Institute to consider other means of financing core diplomatic training. The most common proposal has been to charge Member States according to a "pay as you go" or fee-based system for each participant undertaking core diplomatic training activities. I endorse the view expressed by the Board of Trustees of the Institute in 2006 in its conclusions and recommendations stressing the need to ensure that least developed countries benefit as easily as wealthier nations from such training activities. In this respect, I fear that a fee-based system would discriminate against the neediest countries, while targeting only developed countries would undermine the universal nature of the programme.

IV. Recommendations

31. Multilateral training on diplomacy can and should continue to be offered in a multilateral setting. It is an essential element of the reform desired by the Secretary-General. The burden of covering the costs of core diplomatic training, which is a universal service, must fall on the collective membership of the United Nations. Support from the United Nations regular budget would be a show of solidarity for continuous learning and for reform efforts to make the United Nations a venue for effective and efficient decision-making.

32. Given the negative impact that ending core diplomatic training would have on the overall performance of diplomats, in particular those from developing and least developed countries, in carrying out their multilateral duties, the Secretary-General recommends, as he did in his earlier report (A/62/377, para. 47), that, as a first priority, the Fifth Committee should reconsider the issue of financing UNITAR core training activities from the United Nations regular budget. In parallel, Member States should commit themselves to increasing or resuming their contributions to the Institute.

33. Specifically, the Secretary-General, in the light of the financial information provided in the present report, recommends that an annual subvention of $600,000, or half the costs of core diplomatic training, be granted from the United Nations regular budget.

34. Action on this front should in no way prejudice calls by the General Assembly, in its resolutions 60/213 and 62/210, encouraging the Board of Trustees to continue its efforts to broaden its donor base and further increase the contributions to the General Fund and other sources of funding for core diplomatic training. Nor should it be considered a request for funding activities other than those outlined in the present report.

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Social and human rights questions: advancement of women

Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women on the work of its fifth session

Summary

The Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) held its fifth session on 21 February and 22 May 2008. The Executive Board considered: (a) the implementation of the programme of work during the period October 2007-April 2008; (b) the implementation of the INSTRAW Networking Strategy for the period October 2007-February 2008; (c) activities undertaken in the implementation of the Institute's Action Plan — Fund-raising Strategy, Advocacy and Image Enhancement 2008-2009 during the period February-April 2008; (d) the staffing situation of the Institute; (e) the proposed workplan and operational budget for 2009; and (f) the directorship of the Institute.

Decisions

At its fifth session, the Executive Board adopted a decision that requested the Secretary-General to (a) continue to provide appropriate administrative assistance and support to the Institute through several measures; (b) ensure continuity in the directorship of the Institute; and (c) seek the possibility of upgrading the position of Social Affairs Officer. The decision also requested the Director to intensify coordination with stakeholders and continue with fund-raising efforts.

The Executive Office also:

(a) Instructed the Institute to pursue the implementation of its work programme in keeping with the Institute's Strategic Framework for the period 2008-2011;

* E/2008/100.

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(b) Took note of the Institute's Networking Strategy for 2008-2009;

(c) Took note with appreciation of the work undertaken by the Institute in the implementation of its programme of work during the period October 2007-April 2008;

(d) Took note of the progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan, encouraged the Institute to continue in its implementation and requested that Management Support Services continue to be available to the Institute during the process of implementing the Action Plan;

(e) Approved the workplan and operational budget for 2009 on the understanding that sufficient funds will be available to finance the activities;

(f) Compiled a shortlist of candidates for the post of Director to be submitted to the Secretary-General as stipulated in the statute of the Institute.

I. Organization of the session

1. The fifth session of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) was attended by the following members of the Executive Board: Belarus, Egypt, Grenada, Honduras, Israel, the Philippines, Slovakia, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic and Zimbabwe. The list of participants is included in the annex to the present report.

2. The Executive Board decided to postpone the election of new officers until its sixth session.

3. The President of the fifth session welcomed the Board members and expressed appreciation for their work and support to INSTRAW. She also expressed appreciation to the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Chief of Management Support Services, and the representatives from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat for their continuing support of the Institute.

II. Decisions

4. At its fifth session, on 21 February 2008, the Executive Board adopted the text of the following decision:

The Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women,

Expressing satisfaction with the substantive work of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, in particular the quality of its research and training programmes, as well as the progress it has made in the area of resource mobilization, which has enabled the Institute to repay the subventions received in 2007 and increase the level of voluntary funding from various donors,

Emphasizing the critical importance of achieving tangible research and training outputs in the course of implementing the strategic plan for 2008-2011, as well as ensuring the most efficient use of the Institute's resources by focusing them on upgrading and improving the quality and dissemination of research and training products, while exercising vigilance in the management of expenditures,

Taking note of the Action Plan arising from the consultancy service conducted by Management Support Services from 21 to 28 January 2008,

Recognizing the need to ensure an effective staffing structure within the secretariat of the Institute,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide appropriate administrative assistance and support to the Institute, including by:

(a) Enhancing coordination among the Institute, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Management of the Secretariat, in order to ensure that the objectives of the strategic plan, including resource mobilization efforts, are effectively and efficiently carried out;

(b) Designating a Liaison Officer within the United Nations Secretariat in New York, assigned with facilitating coordination between the secretariat of the Institute in Santo Domingo and United Nations Headquarters, including the

Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts;

(c) Ensuring continuity in the directorship of the Institute, and in that regard, also requests the Secretary-General to announce the availability of the position of Executive Director starting July 2008 and to circulate, as soon as possible, the necessary information to enable the identification of suitable candidates, bearing in mind the importance of balance in geographic representation as well as gender equality;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to intensify coordination with governmental gender machineries in the different regions, as well as to continue collaboration within the United Nations system and with international organizations, development agencies, civil society actors, such as non-governmental organizations and academia, as well as with the private sector;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek the possibility of upgrading the position of Social Affairs Officer from P-3 to P-4, as recommended in the report by the Director of the Institute on the staffing situation.

III. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Implementation of the programme of work and networking strategy

5. Following the presentation of the Director of the Institute, the Executive Board took note with appreciation of the reports on the implementation of the programme of work.

6. The Executive Board also took note of the progress made in the implementation of the networking strategy and expressed satisfaction with the results.

7. The Executive Board congratulated INSTRAW for the work accomplished thus far and instructed the Institute to continue with its activities in line with the strategic framework for the period 2008-2011.

8. The Executive Board recommended that the Institute actively continue with its fund-raising activities and undertake capacity-building activities not only in Latin America, but also in Africa and other regions.

9. The Executive Board also recommended that the Institute expand its partnerships and networking activities.

B. Management Support Services consultancy and implementation of the Action Plan

10. At its fifth session held on 21 February, the Executive Board reviewed the results of the Management Support Services consultancy and approved the resulting Action Plan — Fund-raising Strategy, Advocacy and Image Enhancement 2008-2009.

11. After considering the implementation of the programme of work and in reference to the evaluation of the Institute's work conducted by Management Support Services, the Executive Board made the following recommendations:

(a) To pursue fund-raising activities in order to provide the Institute with the resources required for implementing the strategic framework for the period 2008-2011;

(b) To pursue efforts to achieve recognition as a research and training institution and to expand the Institute's outreach to other gender mechanisms at the regional and international levels, and expand collaboration with other United Nations entities, international organizations and development agencies;

(c) To proceed with implementation of the Institute's new accounting and financial system as recommended by Management Support Services and proceed to purchase the software needed for the required upgrade;

(d) To strengthen relationships with current partners, proceed with the establishment of networking activities and strategic partnerships with organizations of the United Nations system, national machineries, civil society and academia in order to promote the Institute's activities in all regions of the world and implement the strategic framework for the period 2008-2011.

12. At its resumed fifth session, held on 22 May 2008, the Executive Board took note of the progress achieved on the implementation of the Action Plan, recommended that the Institute continue with its activities and requested that Management Support Services continue to be available to support the Institute throughout the process of implementation. The Board also requested that the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of Human Resources Management provide support to the actions taken in implementation of the Action Plan.

C. Staffing situation

13. The Executive Board analysed the report on the staffing situation and recommended that the Secretary-General seek the possibility of upgrading the post of Social Affairs Officer from the P-3 level to the P-4 level.

D. Workplan and operational budget for 2009

14. The Executive Board reviewed the workplan and operational budget and approved it on the understanding that sufficient funds will be available to finance the activities. The Board encouraged the Institute to continue with the austerity measures implemented thus far and to increase its fund-raising activities.

E. Directorship of the Institute

15. The Executive Board expressed its concern with continuity in the post of Director and requested the Secretary-General to take actions towards ensuring continuity.

16. The Members of the Executive Board analysed the numerous applications received following the circulation of the vacancy notice and after a careful review, the Board compiled a shortlist of six candidates to be submitted to the Secretary-General in accordance with the statute of the Institute and with a request that he give priority to the designation of the Director in order to ensure continuity in the directorship of the Institute given the small number of staff. The Board agreed that, pending the appointment of the Director or other appropriate transition arrangements, the next officer in the staff structure of the Institute would function as officer-in-charge.

17. In her farewell address to the Executive Board, the Director expressed her deep appreciation for the support received from the Executive Board and for the support of Member States, in particular the Group of 77 and China, and the donor countries that have supported the Institute during its revitalization process.

18. The Director presented a summary of the Institute's achievements during the past four years, as follows:

(a) Research and training projects in 35 countries throughout the world;

(b) Some 2.5 million hits per month to the Institute's website and 50,000 downloads per month;

(c) Forty-nine collaboration agreements signed with United Nations system, academic, civil society and other partners;

(d) Ten research studies produced on various topics;

(e) Five capacity-building tools developed.

19. Providing more specific information on specific activities undertaken in relation to the three pillars of the United Nations, the Director provided the following information:

Development

- Six research and capacity-building projects in 18 countries
- Five case studies carried out in 3 regions of the world

Peace and security

- Four research and advocacy projects in 4 countries
- Twelve capacity-building tools on security sector reform from a gender perspective
- One guide to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

Human rights

- Two research, training and knowledge management projects in 13 countries
- Eight conceptual documents on governance from a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level

- Three capacity-building tools on governance from a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level
- Two comprehensive analyses of governance from a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level in Central America and the Andean region

20. The Director also made mention of the improvements and renovations which the premises of INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo had undergone over the past four years.

21. The Executive Board expressed its great appreciation to the Director for her success in the strengthening and revitalization of the Institute during the past four years, and presented her with a commemorative plaque.

IV. Closure

22. The Executive Board decided to leave open the possibility of convening a resumed session at such time as the new Director takes office. The Executive Board also decided that the dates of the resumed session and of its sixth session would be determined upon consultations among the Members.

Annex

List of participants

Fifth session, 21 February 2008

Members of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Country	*Representative*
Belarus	Alexander Strigelsky, Second Secretary
Egypt	Soha Gendi, Counsellor
Grenada	Marguerite St John, Counsellor
Honduras	Marcos Suazo, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
Israel	Mazal Renford, Director, Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center
	Meirav Eilon Shahar, Counsellor
Philippines	Marie Yvette Banzon, Second Secretary
Slovak Republic	Viera Hanuláková, Director of the Department of Gender Policy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
	Peter Harmanovsky, Third Secretary
Spain	Nuria González-Barros, First Secretary
Syrian Arab Republic	Warif Halabi, Second Secretary
Zimbabwe	Sophia Nyamudeza, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative

Ex-officio members

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs	Represented by Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Host Country — Dominican Republic	Mariela Sánchez, Minister Counsellor
United Nations Regional Commissions	Daniela Simioni
INSTRAW Director	Carmen Moreno

Others: Paulette Woolf, Chief, Management Support Services, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management; Catherine Peluso, Executive Officer, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Beverly Thompson, Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

Resumed fifth session, 22 May 2008

Members of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Country	*Representative*
Belarus	Alexander Strigelsky, Second Secretary
Egypt	Soha Gendi, Counsellor
Grenada	Marguerite St John, Counsellor
Honduras	Marcos Suazo, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative
	Sofía Cerna, First Secretary
Israel	Meirav Eilon Shahar, Counsellor
Philippines	Marie Yvette Banzon, Second Secretary
Slovak Republic	Viera Hanuláková, Director of the Department of Gender Policy, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
	Peter Harmanovsky, Third Secretary
Spain	Nuria González-Barros, First Secretary
Syrian Arab Republic	Warif Halabi, Second Secretary
Zimbabwe	Sophia Nyamudeza, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative

Ex-officio members

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs	Represented by Rachel Mayanja, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
Host Country — Dominican Republic	Olivio Fermín, Minister Counsellor
Regional Commissions	Daniela Simioni
INSTRAW Director	Carmen Moreno

Others: Paulette Woolf, Chief, Management Support Services, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management; Catherine Peluso, Executive Officer, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Beverly Thompson, Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

United Nations E/2008/74

Economic and Social Council

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5 June 2008

Original: English

Special meeting on the global food crisis
New York, 20 May 2008

Letter dated 3 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to write to you in reference to the special meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the global food crisis, held from 20 to 22 May 2008.

First of all, allow me to convey to you the appreciation of my Government and its thanks for having convened a meeting that certainly provided a valuable opportunity to discuss such a serious matter.

Colombia is convinced that the United Nations must address the global food problem through the promotion of an open and continuing dialogue among Member States and relevant United Nations organizations which can provide guidance for joint international efforts in this field. Furthermore, we believe that the multidimensional causes and scope of the situation can be assessed only on the basis of inclusive deliberations if the effective, collaborative and coordinated responses that are required are to be produced.

In this spirit, and considering that the President's statement (E/2008/66) was dated 20 May 2008, before the majority of delegations had made their statements and the debate had been finalized, I would like to share the following reflections:

1. The complexity of the global food problem makes it imperative to comprehensively evaluate the main phenomena that countries, on the basis of their own experience, have identified as possible drivers of the situation.

2. In that respect, Colombia notes that a large number of delegations, including ours, underscored the need for the international community to analyse the energy-related challenges associated with the problem, especially the pressing and growing demand for energy, as well as the impact of rising oil prices on the costs of transportation and basic inputs for food production.

3. We note, furthermore, that the aforementioned issue, which was not referred to in document E/2008/66, was given significant attention in the "issues note" provided to participants as background for the special meeting.

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4. Drawing from the debate, we believe that addressing that matter is also crucial to providing an appropriate context for the analysis of the production, demand and use of biofuels, which, as indicated by several delegations, constitute a viable alternative that would help accelerate the achievement of sustainable development in many countries.

5. It is also worth indicating that numerous speakers stressed the inconvenience of formulating general and predetermined conclusions on biofuel production without considering that its nature and characteristics vary from country to country. Consequently, they emphasized the need to take into account national circumstances and to make proper distinctions between the different kinds of biofuels, so as to allow for an objective and unprejudiced evaluation of the matter.

6. Colombia considers that in the framework of that specific discussion, it is also necessary to take into account the positive experiences presented by countries where biofuel production is carried out in harmony with food security policies and yields notable environmental and social benefits.

Finally, I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council.

(*Signed*) Claudia **Blum**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations

United Nations E/2008/75

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 June 2008
English
Original: Spanish

Substantive session of 2008
New York, 30 June-25 July 2008
Agenda item 2 (c)
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Letter dated 29 May 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of Chile for its national voluntary presentation at the 2008 annual ministerial review of the Economic and Social Council (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Council, under agenda item 2 (c).

(*Signed*) Alfredo **Labbé**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 29 May 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

[Original: Spanish]

The Millennium Development Goals in Chile

National voluntary presentation of the Government of Chile*

The objectives and goals laid down in the Millennium Declaration are at the core of the development strategy that Chile has drawn up and implemented during the period since the restoration of democracy. During this time, Chile has achieved substantial economic growth, tripling the growth of the per capita product posted in the 1970s and 1980s. The poverty rate has been reduced by two thirds and employment has increased. In 1990, four of every 10 Chileans were living in poverty, and social policies were limited to welfare-oriented and sectoral actions.

The achievements of this period have been significant. Coverage at all levels of education has increased, as have average levels of schooling, and new opportunities have been provided for enrolment in higher education. At present, seven of every 10 secondary school students belong to the first generation in their families who have had access to higher education. In the field of health, maternal and infant mortality rates have fallen; special efforts have been made in primary care, and there is a network of over 1,600 health-care establishments. Access to basic sanitation services has increased, and environmental regulations have been put in place.

Although income distribution has improved since 2000, inequalities persist and are higher than they were during the 1960s. This shows that despite the country's efforts to meet the Goals, further progress is needed in connection with the different targets. Economic growth has not been stable; indeed, it has slowed down as the contagion of the Asian crisis was felt in Latin America. This brought to light the shortcomings of the international financial architecture and the weakness of international and national countercyclical mechanisms. These deficiencies have had a regressive effect, since fluctuations in economic activity have had a negative impact on smaller enterprises and unskilled workers.

From 2006 onward, the groundwork has been laid for a new stage, and thanks to the country's achievements over the last few years, it can undertake more ambitious actions and make needed changes in different areas. Chile has decided to lay the foundation for a new development policy. One of its challenges is to set up a social protection system that will ensure a better quality of life for the whole population and provide the basis for a more inclusive and citizen-oriented democracy. This social protection system focuses on recognizing and guaranteeing rights, creating tools for exercising them and implementing mechanisms for enforcing them.

This system is designed to serve people throughout their life cycle, as it addresses the risks, contingencies and vulnerabilities to which they are exposed. It entails implementing broad reforms in the pension system, the Chile Solidario

* Based on the second report of Chile on progress towards meeting the commitments undertaken in the Millennium Development Goals.

system, the Chile Crece Contigo system, as well as in the health system and in worker protection measures. Thus, many of our public policies no longer include quantitative targets, but rather focus on the challenge of ensuring quality services and effective protection of citizens, generating conditions that are key to equality of opportunities.

Development strategy

Since 1980, the main goal of the administrations of the Concertación party has been to improve the quality of life of the entire population, in particular by overcoming poverty and reducing inequality and different types of discrimination and exclusion. The aim is to construct a democratic, open and egalitarian society in which all citizens are able fully to realize their rights.

The main pillars on which the country's development strategy is based are economic growth, social development and democracy. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that economic policies are sustainable and linking them with social policies and political policies.

The policies are predicated on the recognition of growth as a key to lasting social development, given its impact on the labour market, on the purchasing power of wages and on the generation of resources to adequately finance social spending. The State has a key role to play in the area of social development. In this regard, it should be noted that between 1990 and 2007, Chile increased its gross domestic product (GDP) by a yearly average of 5.4 per cent.

Taking a medium-term approach, fiscal policy has focused on ensuring financial sustainability and the capacity to satisfy the needs of the population during times of crisis, on long-term budgetary restrictions and on efficiency in public administration. During the last 18 years, this approach has been carried out by well-established institutions, thus ensuring that it will be continued over time.

In addition to implementing tax reforms in 1990, under which tax rates were increased, and making the changes needed to ensure a steady flow of tax revenues, the Concertación administrations set up mechanisms that enable it to control economic cycles, thus ensuring the continuity of public policies in general and of social policies in particular, with a view to accumulating resources during periods of rapid growth and favourable terms of trade and ensuring financing when trends in the economic cycle are less positive or negative. It has thus been possible to avoid a procyclical effect between social spending and GDP that causes spending to be higher in times of boom and lower in times of recession. The measures allow for more active social protection in times of crisis.

Fiscal stability is especially important, given that the increasing globalization of the economy and the integration of markets have generated opportunities for growth and development for a number of emerging countries, which, however, have become more vulnerable owing to the fluctuations in the global economy, particularly in financial markets. Thanks to these mechanisms, the country is less vulnerable to financial crises and fluctuations and is able to maintain its social programme and even initiate new ones even when economic growth has been halted or weakened, as was the case following the Asian crisis in 1999. During these difficult periods, social programmes are needed more than ever.

One of the instruments implemented to stabilize trends in public spending is the Fondo de Compensación del Precio del Cobre (copper price compensation fund), whereby the public budget is tied to the medium-term price of copper rather than its current cash price. This makes it possible to save the difference between the two prices when the cash price is higher than expected over the medium term. Another tool is the structural balance approach followed in drawing up the fiscal budget.

In addition, the mining royalty law, which establishes a tax on large copper mining companies, was enacted. With the income from that tax, a fund was created to promote scientific and technological development and enable the country to diversify its production over the medium term, so as to avoid situations like those of the early twentieth century, when the nitrate industry collapsed.

From 2001 onward, the fiscal budget was designed to generate a structural surplus equivalent to 1.0 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). As the fiscal situation improved, the target was changed, in the 2008 budget, to 0.5 per cent of GDP. Under this rule, the annual spending budget is associated not only with the medium-term price of copper and molybdenum, but also to the growth of GDP.

In addition to fostering stability of social policies, the fiscal policy has increased public saving during periods of boom. It has also enhanced the credibility of Chile's fiscal authorities as issuers of international debt, reducing the sovereign premium, improving access to external financing during periods of negative external shock and minimizing the contagion effect of international crises. It has reduced the economy's need to rely on external financing. Finally, responsible fiscal management and the sound financial position of the country have enabled it to gear fiscal spending towards investment to strengthen long-term growth.

Consistent with the above, the stronger social policy has not only responded to the need to address social challenges that cannot be resolved solely through economic growth, the working of the market or temporary palliatives. It has also enhanced the country's potential for economic growth by fostering the development of the human capital needed for modernization, and it has helped to ensure stability and democratic governance.

This strengthening of public social programmes is reflected in changed budget priorities and in the subsequent increase in resources allocated to social purposes, which more than tripled between 1990 and 2007. In addition, social policy has been reoriented from a welfare approach to focusing on social investment policies and programmes aimed at developing human capital and guaranteeing equal opportunities.

As a result of all the above, social policies are targeted to certain priority groups, including boys and girls, the handicapped, indigenous groups, women and the elderly. The policies implemented entail identifying specific needs of each group in order to achieve their social integration. These policies include programme and institutional actions designed to meet their demands and needs. The procedure followed in identifying these groups has been flexible enough to allow for policies and programmes to be adapted to their particular needs and requirements, as evidenced recently in the Chile Crece Contigo child protection system.

Social policies have contributed to reflection and discussion on the design and implementation of public policies, civil society, non-governmental organizations

and academic centres, in the context of efforts to restore the country's democratic institutions.

In responding to the new demands, the institutions have focused on two areas: on creating a legal framework for positive action in policies and programmes to support these groups, and on creating government agencies to draw up and propose measures to enable them to meet their needs.

In this context, social policies have gradually begun incorporating mechanisms and tools for follow-up and periodic evaluation of the actions undertaken, with a view to making any adjustments that might be needed in a timely fashion.

In 2002, Chile made an important change in its social policies: it created the Sistema Chile Solidario, which targets families living in extreme poverty. This system has three fundamental components: a personalized support system whereby the poorest families receive psychological and social services; guaranteed subsidies; and preferential access to public social programmes. Under this system, the State seeks out families that belong to the target population; rather than acting on the basis of demand, it reaches out to serve those who are in the most precarious situations.

Several of these advances in social policy are being implemented in a context of slower economic growth, a situation that has prevailed since 1999. Instead of falling back and stagnating, the social programmes of the Chilean State have continued to move forward, learning from the experience gained in previous years.

Public policies and their results

The public policies adopted have allowed for real success in terms of economic growth, employment and poverty reduction. Substantial progress has been made in regard to health, schooling levels, economic and social infrastructure, as evidenced by the different indicators; this has been recognized by all the international agencies. Nevertheless, serious challenges remain, two of which are the recent slowdown of economic growth and the high degree of inequality, an issue that could make the difference between a country that merely grows and one that with steady step crosses the threshold of comprehensive development.

Political will by itself is not enough to overcome inequalities; it is also important to understand the source of the phenomenon, which is much more than income. Inequalities are evident in the earliest years of a person's life, they continue with the issue of educational opportunities, become more pronounced as the person suffers discrimination and are consolidated by adversity. In Chile there are many types of inequality that are closely interrelated, in terms of opportunities and of results.

The Concertación administrations have moved from welfare-oriented policies to laying the groundwork for a social protection network that is based on guaranteed rights. Progress has also been made in the area of labour. The share of employed workers who pay into the pension system has risen from 55 per cent in 1989 to 57 per cent in 2007; the real minimum wage was multiplied by 2.2 during the same period, after having been depressed for the two preceding decades. All this notwithstanding, however, the labour market is still very precarious. The country is still far from having a context of "decent" work for all.

Since the 1990s, poverty has decreased steadily, access to the most important social services has increased, social spending has had a real distributive effect, and legislation has been enacted to combat discrimination against different groups on the basis of ethnicity, gender, social and territorial origin, age or sexual orientation.

In the case of poverty, in particular, the poor population has been reduced from 38.6 per cent in 1990 to 13.7 per cent in 2006. Chile is thus the first Latin American country to achieve the goal of halving the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty.

In process, however, inequalities have persisted as a result of the inequitable distribution of income. Although this phenomenon has always existed in Chilean society, it has become more intolerable now because of the unequal inclusion patterns, which have nothing to do with merit but rather with a person's socio-economic or cultural origins and the lack of opportunities for them.

A growing perception of the extent of the inequalities leads to frustration and fear concerning insecurity and lack of protection in a society that is open to competition on globalized markets. The need for a social protection system arises not only from this sense of insecurity, but also from the rapid changes taking place in the society. These changes generate vulnerabilities associated with new risks, such as "modern" poverty and high turnover, employment instability, the difficulty of harmonizing domestic roles and family life, especially care for children and the elderly, as more and more women join the workforce.

No adequate response has been found for other families who are vulnerable in different ways, or for the ageing of the population and the situation of immigrants whose numbers are increasing. These vulnerabilities go beyond the population living in poverty and threaten certain segments of the non-poor population, especially children, persons with disabilities, older persons, especially those living alone, teen mothers and female heads of household, indigenous communities and individuals, and immigrants.

Feeling more secure does not mean only being protected from the risk of disease, theft, unemployment or old age; it also has to do with having the opportunity to play a part in the country's progress and receiving fair pay for the effort made.

The main function of social policy should be to eliminate insecurity, this being understood in the broad sense. In the past, social policies have helped to combat poverty, satisfy minimum needs for subsistence and allow access to education, health or housing. The time is now coming when social policies are part of an overall social protection system that is capable of opening up opportunities and limiting risks for those who are not able to protect themselves.

In this context, in addition to Chile Solidario, mentioned above, the social protection system also includes the comprehensive child protection system known as Chile Crece Contigo. This programme follows an intersectoral and multidisciplinary approach to child protection of children that is unprecedented in Chile and has wide territorial coverage. Through it, boys and girls will be protected from the moment of conception with relevant and timely services that allow for early stimulation and provide opportunities for their comprehensive development.

The purpose of the system is to provide equal opportunities for people from the earliest stages in life. Early childhood must be given priority attention in order to break down differences arising from children's origins and to lay the groundwork for a more secure society.

The reform of the pension system is also one of the main lines of action of the social protection system. A law enacted in March 2008 establishes a pension system that is based on three pillars: a pillar of solidarity (pilar solidario) whereby two benefits are provided, i.e., a basic pension (pensión básica solidaria) and a contribution (aporte solidario) consisting of a bonus to supplement the lowest pensions which is a minimum amount in the case of higher pensions; a voluntary pillar (pilar voluntario) the purpose of which is to facilitate, support and encourage non-obligatory saving for old age; and the aforementioned contributory pillar (pilar contributivo), consisting of individual capitalization contributions, to which are added improvements to enhance the competence and transparency of the system.

This reform incorporates specific measures to address gender inequalities arising from the fact that women have a lower level of participation in the labour market throughout their lives, their incomes and retirement savings are lower, and they have a longer life expectancy. The changes implemented as of this year will improve access to and the level of pensions available to women. Incentives are also created for hiring young people in the form of a subsidy to enhance their employability.

The scope of this reform is just as important as its construction and design. During 2006, the Government convened a commission of representatives of all schools of thought which opened up a participatory process to consider observations, opinions and testimonies of representatives of different social groupings regarding the reform. With all this information, the commission prepared a report that served as the basis for drafting the bill that was submitted to democratic debate in the legislature. The discussion covered all aspects of the reform. Agreement was reached with parliamentarians from all parties on improvements to the original proposal, culminating with political and technical support to the initiative and its subsequent adoption.

Educational policies in general have been targeted to the masses. In addition, a new phase is beginning in which education is impacted by the influence on society of knowledge and globalization, as well as new information and communication technologies. All this makes it necessary to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that they are available to all sectors of society.

To help comply with the educational target, educational policies envisage strengthening efforts to address school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, work of young people and standardization of courses. In 2003, a differentiated subsidy was provided to encourage children to stay in school; this consists of an additional payment to the educational establishment to encourage vulnerable students not to drop out and to complete the cycle. This is aimed at enforcing a recent constitutional amendment establishing that secondary education is obligatory and free; as a result, all young people must be provided with 12 years of schooling. In this same context, a "preferential school subsidy" was created, as well as a comprehensive system of scholarships to encourage student retention in the educational system.

As a result of the above, coverage at all levels of education has increased, illiteracy has been reduced and significant progress is being made in preschool education. The enrolment rate at transitional levels 1 and 2 rose from 40.1 per cent to 74.6 per cent among boys and girls aged 4 and 5. Progress in promoting equal opportunities between the sexes was noted, especially in access to all levels of education.

As noted above, programmatic policy decisions have been accompanied by financial, economic and legislative action. This has been the course followed by the most important reforms in social policies in recent years, namely, the aforementioned reform of the pension system and the reform of the health system.

The health system reform represents a landmark in public policy. Essentially, it guarantees universal coverage of benefits and includes explicit health guarantees relating to access, quality, financial protection and timeliness in the granting of benefits associated with a priority set of programmes, diseases or health conditions. This change has been implemented gradually. It began with guaranteeing services for 25 diseases, then was increased to 40; at present, 56 diseases are covered, and it is expected that 80 will be covered by the year 2010.

Great strides have been made in the area of health. The indicators for the infant population have shown a positive trend, as they have for the country in general. This is the result of interventions in connection with social and economic factors; added to the efforts of the health sector itself, these have been translated into significant progress with regard to problems that affected children over the last four decades. Thus, diarrhoea, malnutrition and acute respiratory diseases, which influenced infant mortality figures, have disappeared or decreased. Thus, between 1990 and 2005, the infant mortality rate fell from 16 to 7.9 per 1,000 live births; malnutrition dropped from 0.7 per cent to 0.3 per cent in children under 6 during the same period; the maternal mortality rate fell from 40 to 19.8 per 100,000 live births.

Women's health has always been one of the pillars of health care and as such has been the subject of a specific programme from the beginning of the organization of the Chilean health system. Over time, the programme has been changed; during the last decade, it moved from an approach of maternal and perinatal health care, emphasizing reproductive health, to the women's health programme, oriented to provide a comprehensive response to the different needs of women throughout their life cycle. As a result of these actions, maternal mortality has fallen steadily. Likewise, in work carried out to stop the spread of AIDS, education has been fundamental to preventing the disease, as well as to having the active collaboration of civil society for this cause.

With regard to environmental management, changes have been made from 1990 onwards. Environmental issues are explicitly included in the agenda of public policy on protection and care of the environment. During that year a National Commission on the Environment (CONAMA) was created as a transitional mechanism. Environmental issues had formerly been dealt with by several different sectoral agencies that were concerned with regulation or direct action in the different sectors of production. This approach was considered inefficient in dealing with problems such as atmospheric pollution; water pollution caused by the lack of treatment of residential and industrial liquid waste; overexploitation and lack of mechanisms to protect the forests and the seas.

In 1994, the National Commission on the Environment was established by law as the agency responsible for coordinating the different sectors concerned with the environment, and work was begun on the discussion and subsequent enactment of the General Bases of the Environment Act. There was broad national consensus that this organization should stress the principle of sustainable development, so as to reconcile environmental protection with economic development in a context of social equity and public transparency. The international insertion of the country also encouraged the adoption of a proactive approach in production processes, as well as greater relevance of the environmental issue on the international public agenda. Thus, significant progress was made: environmental institutions were consolidated; the groundwork was laid for an environmental management system through the establishment of preventive and corrective tools, education, research and citizen participation; management, prevention and clean-up plans were designed, and in 1998, the environmental policy was established, focusing on sustainable development.

In 2000, the process of establishing environmental standards and plans was further developed. An information series was implemented to encourage improved management. Oversight, education and environmental certification were expanded, and human and budgetary resources for CONAMA were increased substantially, demonstrating the commitment of the executive branch to improve this management and create conditions for more sustainable development.

In 2007, law No. 20,173 was enacted. This law established the post of Minister President of CONAMA, one of whose main duties was to draw up and submit to the parliament the bill creating the Ministry of the Environment and the Office of the Superintendent of Environmental Oversight. These new environmental institutions will strengthen protection of the environment and compliance with environmental standards.

The analysis of some of the indicators shows that in the area of environmental sustainability of development, consumption of chlorofluorocarbons, which are ozone-depleting substances, has decreased. Coverage of drinking water has increased, both in urban and in rural areas; sewerage services have 95.2 per cent coverage in urban areas, and treatment of urban waste water rose from 20.9 per cent in 2000 to 81.9 per cent in 2006, and expected to reach 100 per cent during the second decade of this new millennium.

As far as housing is concerned, with the creation of the Chile Barrio programme, the situation of more than 105,000 families who lived in slums has been resolved. This, added to the implementation of the regular programmes of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, has made it possible to reduce by 73.7 per cent the number of homes with insecure tenure (UN-Habitat indicator) between 1992 and 2006. The target and the goals proposed in this area are being met.

Pending challenges and tasks

The history of social policies and advances over the last 17 years provides a sound basis for tackling the next challenge: to build up in Chile a comprehensive system of social protection, based on social rights that will guarantee equal opportunities and coverage of the main risks that threaten low-income families

throughout their lives. The challenge is to address it as a national task, as doing so will radically enhance the chances of success.

In order to ensure the sustainability of a comprehensive system of social protection, it is imperative to move ahead at the same time with the productive development agenda, so as to enhance the employability of the workforce and the productive capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises.

This report reflects great challenges and tasks that are pending, including that of reducing inequalities in income distribution. Although this problem is less serious in a context of democracy, it goes through fluctuations and the situation is still not satisfactory. Economic fluctuations, which cause activity to fall below the potential GDP (or installed capacity), have had a negative effect on small and medium-sized enterprises and on unskilled workers. The exchange rate trends have been a recurring problem. This has a negative effect on the generation of value added to exports of natural resources and discourages upgrading of exports in terms of their capacity to invigorate the rest of GDP.

Despite the substantial progress observed in society, greater social equity remains a major and continuing challenge, in a country with great achievements in development. Average wages are still low, although rising; gender inequities are evident in the workplace, in regard to participation in the job market, in access to high-level positions, and in wages received in similar occupational categories. Another major challenge has to do with political participation of women, who are underrepresented in the legislative branch, far from the targets proposed for 2015.

A good system of social protection helps people throughout their life cycle, protecting their first steps, ensuring access to opportunities for education and jobs, covering their risks of disease and disability, guaranteeing old age with dignity. The early years are crucial in the development of competencies and key capacities that remain with people all their lives. Stimulation and socialization of children in this stage determine, to a large extent, their ability to perform at later stages of learning, ensure healthy physical and psychological development, and have a satisfactory lifestyle in terms of work, family and social interaction during their adulthood.

In the field of health, challenges have to do with effectively ensuring the gradual implementation of the health reform for all guaranteed health problems. This entails timely and high-quality care for people by legally protecting their rights with pre-established and well-known mechanisms and procedures. This will make it possible to address current health-care demands in the area of infant malnutrition. The main problem the country needs to continue working on is obesity, which involves carrying out actions not only in the field of health, but also working with a number of institutions that can help people overcome the problem. Likewise, efforts must be directed, in a country with an ageing population, at containing the advance of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer, as well as habits such as smoking, drinking and sedentary lifestyles, and the increasing penetration of drugs. All these factors affect the well-being and health of the population.

In education, once coverage has been expanded at all levels, policies and programmes face the challenge of improving the quality of education and reducing inequities in learning processes. Education is a fundamental asset both for improving quality of life and for increasing access to the labour market and raising wages, and for contributing to the growth and competitiveness of the country.

With regard to environmentally sustainable development, it should be noted that in 2005, Chile submitted to an evaluation of its environmental performance in the context of its joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As a result of the evaluation, 52 recommendations were made. The most important challenges include the strengthening of environmental institutions so as to more efficiently address environmental problems, both national and global. It was also recommended that the system of protection of wildlife and marine areas be improved, as well as biodiversity conservation and promotion of efficient energy use.

In addition, the institutions responsible for environmental management must deal with inequity in environmental matters. Everyone has the right to have access to adequate environmental conditions, and for environmental risks to be reduced among different groups. To meet this goal, the Government is drawing up the bases for a new environmental policy, the central focus of which will be environmental equity.

Guaranteeing environmental sustainability today calls for major efforts and coordination not only by the State but also by civil society and the productive sectors, so as to coordinate actions to adequately address environmental problems and protection of ecosystems.

The housing policy has changed significantly in recent years. The main challenges to be addressed under the new policy are to meet quantitative needs (reduce the housing deficit, target families living in poverty), guarantee quality (improve standards and the design and construction of dwellings) and promote social integration (setting housing solutions in neighbourhoods and cities).

In brief, Chile has met a significant number of its targets, and is in a position to meet others before 2015. The implementation of a consistent political, economic and social strategy under the current democratic system places the country in a good position to meet the commitments it undertook in 2000. At the same time, the progress made requires it to assume with greater vigour the pending challenges, beyond the Millennium Development Goals, with a view to creating conditions for sustainable development and to further strengthen its democracy, with equal opportunities for all the country's inhabitants.

Cooperation and the international environment

In the early stages, international cooperation which was largely geared towards seeking and receiving resources for cooperation. The emphasis soon shifted towards the sharing of goals between those who received and those who provided cooperation. This was reflected in the creation of the Chilean Horizontal Cooperation Programme, which was designed as a means for passing on that which had been received and supporting, insofar as the country was able, the development efforts of countries that were less developed or at the same level of development as Chile. This Programme was formally set up in 1992, and its purpose was to implement the Chilean Government's desire to share its capacities and experiences, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean. This type of relations with those countries became an integral part of Chile's foreign policy.

Chile also participates actively in peacekeeping missions. In this regard, it has played an important role in cooperating with MINUSTAH, in Haiti, an action that has extended to civilian cooperation with programmes aimed at helping that country overcome poverty.

The country has participated, since its inception, in the Initiative against Hunger and Poverty that was launched by the Governments of Brazil, Chile and France in 2004. This initiative, which involves cooperation between countries in the North and the South, has identified mechanisms and tools for innovative financing of global actions to advance towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Its was set up as a response to delays in meeting the Goals by several developing countries, partly because of lack of financing. An effort was made to find new sources, preferably predictable and stable, to complement official development assistance (ODA). In September 2004, at United Nations Headquarters, the Heads of Government of member countries of the Initiative submitted proposals on a number of innovative financing mechanisms.

In September 2005, on the occasion of the Summit at the United Nations, at which compliance with the Goals was evaluated, the Initiative announced its first pilot programme, aimed at combating three pandemics that generate poverty and serious socio-economic backwardness. The financing would come mainly from an innovative source, namely, special rates applied to airline tickets. Since 2006, Chile has applied an airport tax of two dollars that is paid by every passenger travelling abroad. This is contributed by Chile to the United Nations system for the implementation of actions against hunger and poverty around the world. The funds are contributed to a pilot programme known as UNITAID which was set up in 2006 and is aimed at combating AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. UNITAID operates within the World Health Organization so as to avoid overlapping overhead costs.

Finally, two other forms of international cooperation should be mentioned before concluding this report. One has to do with technical cooperation for development, which is a key factor for growth with equity. This programme provides training for workers and for small-scale entrepreneurs. Chile is making changes in its current training programmes. To supplement ongoing actions, it needs the cooperation of countries that have successfully improved their workforce with the support of effective training programmes that could facilitate Chile's performance.

The second aspect has to do with the international environment in which the so-called emerging economies are developing. It is noteworthy that most of the Latin American economies have gone through a serious and lengthy period of economic disequilibria, owing to the effect of the Asian crisis. Chile's GDP barely grew by 2.6 per cent per year between 1999 and 2003. This affected its potential for social and productive progress during those years. The international environment was not encouraging for countries like Chile, which had acted responsibly in the preceding years, in its efforts to deal more effectively with negative

external shocks. It has been proposed that institutions such as the International Monetary Fund should review their compensatory or countercyclical financing facilities so that when similar situations arise in future, creating negative shocks in export prices or financial volatility, countries that have previously demonstrated responsible behaviour would be provided with: (i) all the external funds needed to maintain high utilization of its productive capacity; (ii) quickly and in timely fashion and (iii) with no additional conditions. The funds required could come from the resumption of special drawing rights (SDRs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF); this would represent a significant step towards a more balanced globalization process than that which currently prevails. This proposal has been submitted by the Initiative for Action against Hunger and Poverty with the active support of Chile. It is described in the 2008 report to the Committee on Development Policy (CDP) of the Economic and Social Council.

Annex

The first report of Chile on its progress in complying with the Millennium Development Goals was published in 2005. In that report, Chile established baselines for the minimum indicators for the targets, as well as additional indicators for 2015 in connection with each Goal, bearing in mind the availability of resources and the country's economic growth, socio-economic conditions and development policies and strategy. The second report shows the current status of each target and its evolution since 1990, the progress made for each indicator, the main challenges faced and the policies and programmes that make up the framework of support for achieving the goals, as well as an appraisal of follow-up capacity and progress towards fulfilling each commitment. The information provided includes an overview of the economic, social and environmental conditions prevailing in the country.

In order to identify remaining shortcomings, a serious effort has been made in the second report to disaggregate information by territories, so that the development goals are seen not only as commitments to be met at the national level, but also as requirements for actions to enable individual regions to achieve them, leaving no territory behind. The information is also broken down by sex, age and ethnic origin, where pertinent and feasible, in order to analyse specific differences between groups that might point to a need for additional measures and strategies to achieve all the targets and goals. Likewise, a brief description of progress in public policies is provided, focusing on economic and social rights.

Millennium Development Goals: minimum indicators

Indicators	*1990*	*2000*	*2006*	*2015 Target*
Target 1				
1. Proportion of population whose income is less than $1 per day	3.6%	2.2%	1.1%	1.8%
2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty)	1.6%	1.0%	0.5%	0.8%
3. Share of poorest quintile in total monetary income	4.4%	4.3%	4.7%	4.6%
Target 2				
4. Prevalence of underweight children under six years of age	0.7%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	8.0%	4.0%	4.0%†	4.0%
Target 3	*1990*	*2000*	*2005*	*2015 Target*
1. Net enrolment ratio in basic education (primary and lower secondary)	88.0%	91.0%	88.0‡	95.5%
2. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5	N/D	91.6%	93.3%	100%
3. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds	98.4%	99.1%	98.7%	99.8%
Target 4				
1. Ratio of girls to boys in basic education	1.00	0.97	0.94	1.00
2. Ratio of girls to boys in middle education	1.05	1.02	1.01	1.00
3. Ratio of girls to boys in higher education	0.81	0.87	0.97	0.97
4. Literacy rate of 15-24-year-olds, ratio of women to men	1.04	0.99	1.01	1.00
5. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector	31.5%	35.8%	36.5%	40%
6. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	6.0%	9.5%	12.6%	40%
Target 5	*1990*	*2000*	*2005*	*2015 Target*
1. Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 inhabitants that age)	0.79	0.31	0.34	0.26
2. Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	16.0	8.9	7.9	5.3
3. Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles	96.8%	97.0%	89.7%	97.0%

Target 6				
1. Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	40.0	18.70	19.8	10.0
2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	99.2%	99.7%	99.8%	100%
Target 7				
1. HIV prevalence among pregnant women, nationwide[§]	N/I	0.05	0.05	0.05
2a. Condom use among 15-24-year-olds (initiating sexual activity)**	N/I	18.0%	46.1%	50.0%
2b. Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS	N/I	35.0%	70.0%	95.0%
2c. Availability of condoms among population aged 15-49 (number of condoms imported/15-49-year-old population)[††]	N/I	1.7	2.6	5.0
3. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years[‡‡]	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/A
Target 8				
4. Incidence and death rates associated with malaria	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5. Proportion of population in malaria risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
6. Prevalence of tuberculosis (100,000 inhabitants)[1]	52.2	19.9	14.2	7.5
7. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course	82.0%	84.0%	83.0%	95.0%
Target 9				
1. Proportion of land area covered by forest (including plantations and native forest)	20.18%	20.40%	20.88%	Increase
-Plantations	2.34%	2.62%	2.98%	Increase
-Native forest	17.84%	17.78%	17.90%	Keep decreasing
2. Ratio of land area protected to maintain biological diversity to total area	18.02%	18.81%	18.95%	Increase
2.1 Total protected land area (National System of Protected Wildlife Areas of the State — SNASPE)	18.01%	18.66%	18.95%	Increase
2.2 Total marine and coastal protected areas (Marine and Coastal Protected Areas — AMCP)	0.012%	0.15%	0.81%	Increase

3. Energy use (equivalent tons of petroleum) per $1 million GDP				
Energy intensity in Tep/MMUS$	104.1	98.4	88	[b]
4. Per capita CO_2 emissions and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (tonnes PAO)				
-CO_2 emissions	-	-		[c]
-Total CO_2 emissions	15 423.73[d]	43 953.06[e]	*	
-Per capita CO_2 emissions (tonnes/inhabitant)	-1.17[d]	2.82[e]	*	
5. Proportion of population using solid fuels	-			[h]
5.1 Proportion of dwellings using wood-burning cookers in the city of Temuco, by socio-economic level				
-High socio-economic level	N/I	8%[j]	1%	Reduction
-Medium socio-economic level	N/I	28%[j]	13%	Reduction
-Low socio-economic level	N/I	59%[j]	54%	Reduction
5.2 Proportion of dwellings using simple wood-burning heaters in the city of Temuco, by socio-economic level				
-High socio-economic level		30%[j]	24%	Reduction
-Medium socio-economic level		39%[j]	31%	Reduction
-Low socio-economic level	N/I	11%[j]	21%	Reduction
Target 10				
6. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, in urban and rural areas				
6.1 Proportion of people lacking sustainable access to drinking water in urban areas	2.60%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
6.2 Proportion of people lacking sustainable access to drinking water in rural areas	23.50%	1.5%	1%	0.0%
7. Proportion of population with access to an improved sanitation facility, in urban and rural areas				
7.1 Proportion of urban population without sewer system	17.4%	5.6%	4.8%	0.0%

Target 11	2002	2006	2015 Target
8. Proportion of people with access to secure tenure			
8.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums (secure tenure index) UN-Habitat	10.65%	2.49%	3.6%

‡ From 2006 onward, the Ministry of Education has implemented the proposal by OECD and, in particular, UNESCO-OREAL, for estimating net enrolment rates. Taking into account this change, it can be seen that the net enrolment rate for basic education in 2006 was 94%, which is an encouraging sign that the target of universal coverage for this level of education by 2015 can be met.

§ This indicator replaces the one on Prevalence of HIV among pregnant women aged 15 to 24 years. The value for 2000 corresponds to 1999.

** Replaces the indicators on condom use in rate of use of contraceptives by married women aged 15 to 49 years; condom use among 15-24-year-olds in situations of high risk (men) and condom use among 15-24-year-olds (women). The Source is changed for 2005.

†† No information is available on enrolment of boys according to whether they are orphans or not.

[a] Information for 2004.

[b] The country has no committed target for this indicator.

[c] The targets are set in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Chile has no committed targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

[d] Total net emissions calculated on the basis of PRIEN 2000 and INIA 2005 inventories.

[e] Total net emissions for 2001 calculated on the basis of PRIEN 2000 and INIA 2005 inventories.

[f] Net per capita emissions calculated on the basis of DICTUC 2004 and INIA 2005 inventories. Source of demographic data: National Statistical Institute (INE).

• Chile is preparing its second national communication in the framework of the Convention on Climate Change, from which information for 2006 will be obtained.

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Social and human rights questions: human rights

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/104, considers how the principles of equality between men and women and non-discrimination against women are paramount to the promotion and implementation of economic, social and cultural rights under international human rights law.

Section II focuses on clarifying the scope of State parties obligations to eliminate discrimination and ensure equality between men and women and in relation to economic, social and cultural rights. By way of illustration, section III addresses the relevance of women's economic, social and cultural rights in the context of post-conflict reconstruction and democratization policies.

* E/2008/100.

** The present report was submitted late in order to reflect the most recent information.

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08-37493

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/104, focuses on economic, social and cultural rights and the principles of equality between men and women and non-discrimination against women. It complements two previous reports to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive sessions (E/2006/86 and E/2007/22), which addressed the issues of legal protection of economic, social and cultural rights and the concept of progressive realization, respectively.

2. The prohibition of discrimination on any grounds is one of the pillars of international human rights law; de jure and de facto discrimination against women is therefore at the core of our work. Yet, the lesser priority given to the protection of economic, social and cultural rights is a burden often carried disproportionately by women in developing and developed societies alike. Laws, policies and programmes remain inadequate when addressing the multiple layers of discrimination that women face owing to their sex or combined with their age, race, language, religion, marital status, health status, national or social origin, birth, disability or any other grounds. Although some advances have been made, inequality persists, often as a consequence of deeply rooted practices and traditional patterns of exclusion.

3. With a view to illustrating this point, section III examines the importance of combating discrimination and promoting equality between men and women in post-conflict societies. There are two reasons for this choice. First, although different stakeholders are gradually refining their analysis of the specific types of impact of conflict on women's rights, less attention is paid to protecting women's economic, social and cultural rights in the aftermath of conflict. Second, there remains a need for greater clarity of how to adequately promote equality and non-discrimination of women in relation to these rights during reparation and reconstruction.

4. In this regard, section III discusses some opportunities a human rights perspective brings to the situation of women in post-conflict societies and, consequently, to a process of democratization and sustainable peace that incorporates all human rights on an equal footing. In doing so, the High Commissioner complements a previous report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/4/62), in which a broader discussion on economic, social and cultural rights in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations was presented.

II. The principles of equality and non-discrimination of women and economic, social and cultural rights

A. Background

5. Women continue to suffer discrimination in the enjoyment of their human rights, including in the realm of economic, social and cultural rights. To remedy this situation, States have undertaken obligations to ensure equality and to prohibit discrimination by not only amending legislation, but also by changing policies and practices and by taking special temporary measures. Nevertheless, perpetual imbalances in relation to the rights to work, housing, health and education offer a

few striking examples of the challenges that women face. The paragraphs below provide some examples.

6. In relation to the right to work, despite decades of international legislation, inequality continues in the form of gender segregation in the labour force, lower wages for work of equal value and other less favourable contractual conditions. Developing and developed economies incorporate more and more women in the informal sectors, girls and young women are recruited as domestic migrant workers, sometimes unpaid or exploited for sexual purposes, living in precarious conditions and without legal guarantees.[1] In this regard, data from the *Human Development Report 2007/2008* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) show that women in some countries earn at best around 30 per cent less than men for work of equal value; in more extreme situations, men earn up to 500 per cent more than women for the same work.[2] The private sphere puts greater weight on women in relation to their work, since women often disproportionately carry the unremunerated workload of families and communities, including domestic labour, collection and provision of water, subsistence farming, and the care of children, persons with disabilities or illnesses and older persons.[3]

7. The enjoyment by women of the right to adequate housing presents similar disparities. Gender-neutral laws and policies fail to take into account the special circumstances of women. The predominance of customary laws and practices protecting men's ownership or inheritance of land and bias in the judiciary and public administration in relation to property are all too common forms of discrimination against women in the enjoyment of this right. One estimate suggests that women, a term which includes girls and adolescents, represent 70 per cent of the 1.5 billion people around the world who are considered inadequately housed.[4]

8. With regard to the right to health, reproductive rights and maternal mortality, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) noted that "every minute one woman dies needlessly of pregnancy-related causes, a figure that has hardly improved over the past few decades" and that "another eight million or more suffer life-long health consequences from the complications of pregnancy".[5] While many of these women could be saved by timely health interventions, including access to skilled obstetric care and to properly equipped health facilities, these essential aspects of the right to health are often not guaranteed through public policies and budget allocations, particularly in rural, suburban or poverty-stricken areas, where such measures would

[1] See A/59/287/Add.1.

[2] See UNDP, *Human Development Report 2007/2008*. Indicators on the gender-related development index depict estimated earned income, based on data for the years between 1996 and 2005 and on the ratio of female/male non-agricultural wages; shares of economically active population and GDP per capita is always higher for the male population.

[3] See for example principle 24 of the Montreal Principles on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2002), adopted by a group of independent experts.

[4] Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, "In Search of Equality: A Survey of Law and Practice Related to Women's Inheritance Rights in the Middle East and North Africa Region" (2006). See also E/CN.4/2005/43.

[5] UNFPA and the University of Aberdeen, "Maternal Mortality Update 2004: Delivering into Good Hands" (2005). United Nations Millennium Project, "Who's got the power? Transforming health systems for women and children" (2005). The exact relation of levels of maternal morbidity and mortality varies in different settings and data are limited, including according to age group. Estimates of annual global maternal morbidity range from a conservative 8 million to over 20 million.

be most needed. The protection of the right to health of women requires specific measures, particularly in the area of sexual and reproductive health, to ensure equal enjoyment of this right with men.

9. Women also suffer discrimination in the realization of the right to education. According to the UNDP Human Development Report, while worldwide gross primary school enrolment figures of girls and boys are close to parity, inequalities become significant with age. There are approximately two girls for every three boys in secondary schools, and only one woman per every four men at university level.[6] Social Watch, an international coalition of non-governmental organizations, has warned that inequalities in education might be increasing. According to its research, the balance between countries that progress and those that regress is worrisome, with regressions, in several of the States for which data are available, outnumbering those making progress by more than twice.[7]

10. Women are subject to multiple forms of discrimination, a phenomenon where an individual suffers discrimination on the basis of several grounds concurrently; for example, a woman with a disability might be subject to discrimination not only because of her sex but also for the fact that she has a disability, thus multiplying the barriers to her full participation in society.[8] The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has observed that there are situations in which racial discrimination affects primarily or only women, or affects women in different ways. It has listed several examples, some of which are relevant to discrimination in the area of economic, social and cultural rights; for example, in its general recommendation XXV on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, the Committee noted that women workers in the informal sector or domestic workers employed abroad might suffer from both racial discrimination and discrimination on the basis of sex. The Committee further highlighted the fact that women might also be hindered by a lack of access to remedies and complaint mechanisms for racial discrimination because of discrimination on the basis of sex in the legal system or the private sphere.[9]

11. Inequality and discrimination based on sex prevent women from enjoying all economic, social and cultural rights. Additionally, they set off a chain reaction that affects the exercise of the full range of human rights, including civil and political rights, and constitute a manifestation of the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights. Discrimination in the right to housing directly affects women's enjoyment of other rights; without proof of residency, women are often unable to find stable work or to vote. Without secondary education, many women may not have an equal opportunity to have access to and make use of public information about any of their rights, or to be elected. Without adequate health services that ensure effective and timely attention during pregnancy, women's right to life is seriously at risk. Without a system that allows women to have access to judicial and

[6] With 64 per cent (world average) in gross secondary enrolment and only 25 per cent of women (world average) in gross tertiary enrolment. See UNDP, *Human Development Report 2007/2008*.

[7] See the Gender Equity Index 2008: progress and setbacks, available at the Social Watch website www.socialwatch.org (accessed 14 May 2008).

[8] Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that "women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination".

[9] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 18* (A/55/18), annex V.

other mechanisms of redress on an equal footing, impunity and silence perpetuate the violations we are aiming to combat.

12. Poverty can act as a cause as much as a consequence of discrimination against women in the area of economic, social and cultural rights. As the World Bank noted in its World Development Report for 2000-2001, while patterns of inequality vary across societies, in most countries the majority of women are disadvantaged in terms of their relative power and control over resources. Poverty outcomes are greatly affected by social norms, values and customary practices in the family, the community or the market, leading to further exclusion of women. Since political power may mimic the distribution of economic power, some State institutions may be particularly unfavourable to the poor.[10] Public investment may be subject to corruption and arbitrariness on the part of the State. In other cases, a lack of focused attention on the impact on the most disadvantaged groups — in other words, the absence of a human rights lens, rather than the leakage of public funds — may prevent the benefits of public investment from reaching these groups. Women heads of households, women living with HIV/AIDS, refugees, displaced or trafficked women, widows or older women are among the poorest population groups in the world.[11] In this context, direct and indirect costs required to have access to economic, social and cultural rights can aggravate existing exclusion. With regard to the right to education, the Committee on the Rights of the Child observed that the direct and hidden costs of education, such as school books, materials or "voluntary quotas", are widening the gender gap. As a consequence, it noted that some specific groups of children, such as pregnant girls, are predominantly affected.[12] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights underscored, in its general comment No. 19, the redistributive character of social security, its role in poverty reduction and alleviation and its significance to women at various stages of their lives.[13]

B. Relevant treaty provisions

13. International human rights law prohibits discrimination against women and requires States to ensure equal enjoyment by women and men of economic, social and cultural rights. According to article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and distinctions of any kind, such as sex, are prohibited. The prohibition was reiterated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights through specific provisions. Article 2, paragraph 2, sets out the general principle of non-discrimination in relation to these rights, while article 3 explicitly refers to equality between men and women:

Article 2, paragraph 2

> "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without

[10] See *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking poverty*.

[11] See *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[12] See CRC/C/15/Add.186 and CRC/C/15/Add.147.

[13] See E/C.12/GC/19.

discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."

Article 3

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant.

14. The Covenant also includes provisions on equality and non-discrimination in relation to the right to equal remuneration for equal work (art. 7) and to education (access to higher education, art. 13).

15. Article 2, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights mirrors article 2, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which sets forth an equivalent principle of non-discrimination. Article 26 of the latter Covenant provides for the protection of equality before the law, including a guarantee for effective protection against discrimination on any grounds, such as sex. This protection covers all rights, including economic, social and cultural rights; thus, for example, in 1984, the Human Rights Committee noted that article 26 was concerned with the prohibition of discrimination in law or in practice in any field regulated and protected by public authorities, including the right to social security, even though that right is recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights but not the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[14]

16. Five other core international human rights treaties set out States' obligations to combat and eliminate discrimination. These instruments focus on discrimination on particular grounds, such as race or disability, and apply the general principles of non-discrimination and equality of men and women to economic, social and cultural rights. These treaties are (a) the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; (b) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (c) the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (d) the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and (e) the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

17. For the scope of the present report, article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which defines the term "discrimination against women", offers essential guidance:

> For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

[14] See CCPR/C/29/D/182/1984.

18. Some elements of the above definition deserve closer examination:

(a) The principle of non-discrimination applies to all women, and given the scope of the Convention, the term "women" includes girls and adolescents. Similarly, this principle is essential in the consideration of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including economic, social and cultural rights;

(b) The principle of non-discrimination is linked to and complemented by the principle of equality between men and women, being two sides of the same coin. In practical terms, these two principles must be carefully crafted into legislation, policies, programmes, procedures and practices, each with its own specificities;

(c) The article states that discrimination means distinctions as well as exclusions or restrictions made on the basis of sex, offering a comprehensive set of ways in which actions and omissions might lead to a violation of human rights;

(d) Article 1 clarifies that such distinctions, exclusions or restrictions are violations, either when having the effect — the objective outcome — or with the purpose — the discriminatory intention — of impairing or nullifying the exercise of all rights by women.

C. Key concepts in relation to discrimination and equality

19. Over the years, the conceptual debate and the work of international and regional human rights bodies have significantly deepened the understanding of various forms of inequality between men and women, and of discrimination against women. In the paragraphs below, some key concepts meriting a discussion are presented as they relate to economic, social and cultural rights.

De jure and de facto discrimination and equality

20. Women are protected against discrimination that is both de facto and de jure; in other words, the principle of non-discrimination protects against discrimination in both practice and law. Thus, for example, laws ensuring inheritance rights to land or marital property only to men or legislation permitting different ages of marriage for men and women, or failing to offer equal protections from practices that promote child marriage, marriage by proxy, or coercion, are forms of de jure discrimination. Many States have made significant efforts to reduce de jure discrimination in recent decades. Nevertheless, a recent study commissioned by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2008 underscores the persistence of discriminatory laws worldwide despite existing normative framework at the international level. Although most such laws are found in the civil sphere, they have far-reaching consequences and impact on the enjoyment by women of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.[15]

21. While examples of progress are to be found at the national level, this is often not sufficient to change discriminatory practices; consequently, the prohibition of discrimination goes beyond an examination of laws to consider de facto discrimination. Indeed, human rights law is concerned not only by formal equality (de jure equality) but also substantive or de facto equality. The distinction between

[15] Fareda Banda, "Project on a mechanism to address laws that discriminate against women", available at the OHCHR website www.ohchr.org (accessed 26 May 2008).

de jure and de facto equality for the protection of women's economic, social and cultural rights was addressed by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its general comment No. 16 on article 3.[16] The Committee observed that "formal equality assumes that equality is achieved if a law or policy treats men and women in a neutral manner. Substantive equality is concerned, in addition, with the effects of laws, policies and practices and with ensuring that they do not maintain, but rather alleviate, the inherent disadvantage that particular groups experience" (para. 7). The Committee then underlined that "States parties should take into account that such laws, policies and practice [that are prima facie gender neutral] can fail to address or even perpetuate inequality between men and women because they do not take account of existing economic, social and cultural inequalities, particularly those experienced by women" (para. 8).

22. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has called for a more integral treatment of discrimination against women to achieve formal and substantive equality. The Commission has referred to a structural intervention aiming at "ending the subordination of women as a group" and not simply achieving formal equality among individuals. According to the Commission, the formal equality approach "assumes a world of 'autonomous individuals starting a race or making free choices'". In the case of women, "this approach to non-discrimination equates sexual equality with equal treatment, and [...] disregards the fact that men and women may be running different races from differing starting points".[17]

23. The Commission's approach goes beyond a consideration of standards and practices that are prima facie neutral to analysing their discriminatory impact when applied. The Commission highlights how "the discriminatory treatment manifests itself in individual cases, but is deeply rooted in a prejudice against the group. Structural intervention is needed to undo the gender hierarchy so firmly entrenched and institutionalized in society and so resistant to change". It then adds that "intervention has to be geared toward introducing change in basic social realms and institutions, such as justice, politics, the family and the marketplace".[18]

24. In recognition of the fact that human rights law examines discrimination and equality in both law and practice, treaty bodies consistently go beyond an examination of legislation to consider practices that might discriminate against women. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has urged States to respect and promote the human rights of immigrant, refugee and minority women, including access to education and to work, over discriminatory cultural practices, and to take effective and proactive measures, including awareness-raising programmes, to sensitize the community to combat patriarchal attitudes and practices and stereotyping of roles, and to eliminate discrimination against women in immigrant and minority communities.[19]

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[16] See E/C.12/2005/4.

[17] Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, "Access to justice for women victims of violence in the Americas" (20 January 2007), paras. 72 and 73, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc.68.

[18] Ibid, para. 77.

[19] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/56/38), para. 206.

Direct and indirect discrimination

25. Discrimination can be both direct and indirect. Direct discrimination can be defined as a difference in treatment relying explicitly on distinctions based on sex or one of the other recognized categories of discrimination. Direct discrimination can appear in law and in practice, including customary practices, for example when women are not allowed to eat until men are fully fed, are only allowed less nutritious food, are forbidden to attend higher education, or when denied access to information about sexual and reproductive health issues.[20] Similarly, the refusal to hire women because they could become pregnant, or the termination of their contracts if they do so, constitute direct discrimination in relation to the right to work.

26. Indirect discrimination occurs when a law, policy or programme appears to be neutral (for example, as it relates to men and women), but has a discriminatory effect when implemented. In this case, the outcome or the end result creates a disadvantage for women compared to men, owing to pre-existing inequalities not addressed by a supposedly neutral measure. Indirect discrimination can exacerbate existing inequalities owing to a failure to recognize the historic patterns of discrimination. For example, in its general comment No. 1 on the aims of education, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, when referring to the aim of education (art. 29, para. 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child), stressed the impact of hidden discrimination on a girl's rights.[21]

27. The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has addressed the problem of indirect discrimination against women in relation to the spread of HIV/AIDS, notably among children, refugees and minorities. It often requests from States parties disaggregated information and campaigns in relation to those who are particularly vulnerable.[22] Some campaigns about health services, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and reproductive health might not be tailored to the women at greatest risk. For instance, according to the World Bank, in 2005, more than half the estimated 5 million people who had contracted HIV worldwide were young persons between the ages of 15 and 24, the majority of them young women and girls. Similarly, while nearly 60 per cent of young women in developing countries are mothers by the time they reach 25, relevant information about family planning, preventive and curative health care will often not reach this group of women unless they are specifically targeted.[23] Failure to adequately address a combined age-sex dimension when designing public policies may give rise to discriminatory effects, whether direct or indirect; in other words, while the

[20] Examples of possible violations of article 3 in relation to article 11 (1) and (2) are discussed by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its general comment No. 16, paras. 27 and 28.

[21] "Discrimination [...], whether it is overt or hidden, offends the human dignity of the child and is capable of undermining or even destroying the capacity of the child to benefit from educational opportunities [...]. To take an extreme example, gender discrimination can be reinforced by practices such as a curriculum which is inconsistent with the principles of gender equality, by arrangements which limit the benefits that girls can obtain from the educational opportunities offered, and by unsafe or unfriendly environments which discourage girls' participation." CRC/GC/2001/1, para. 10.

[22] See CERD/C/64/CO/9/2004, para. 17, CERD/C/ESR/CO/2007, para. 17 and CERD/C/ZAF/CO/3/2006, para. 20.

[23] See World Bank, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the next generation* (2006).

intention behind campaigns on these issues might not be discriminatory per se, failure to deliberately address the groups most at risk could effectively lead to indirect discrimination.

Temporary special measures

28. According to article 4(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women should not be regarded as discrimination. Rather, temporary special measures can be important to achieve the structural, social and cultural changes necessary to correct past and current forms and effects of discrimination against women. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its general recommendation No. 25, broadened the scope of such measures in relation to several other articles in the Convention, if such measures are necessary and appropriate in order to accelerate the achievement of women's de facto or substantive equality.[24]

29. Four characteristics must be kept in mind. Firstly, temporary special measures should not be deemed necessary forever, even though they might be applied for a long period of time. Since these measures must be functional, the period of application should depend on the achievement of substantive equality in a particular domain. Secondly, they comprise a wide variety of legislative, executive, administrative, programmatic and other regulatory instruments, policies and practices, such as hiring and promotion, targeted recruitment and tailor-made programmes. Thirdly, the meaning of "special" should not be seen as casting a veil of vulnerability over women; rather, the term refers to measures that are designed to serve a specific goal. Fourthly, the Committee stresses the importance of special temporary measures covering governmental actors as much as private organizations and enterprises.

30. Temporary special measures have been under-explored in relation to economic, social and cultural rights, and given the prevalence of the substantive inequality of women with regard to these rights, there appears to be an urgent need to incorporate these measures, such as promoting the completion of high school by pregnant girls, targeting scholarships by governmental and private actors for university level degrees, or introducing special provisions against traditional prejudice or other barriers for women farmers or heads of households to have access to credit, technology, seeds, land or judicial mechanisms. Certain special temporary measures in relation to economic, social and cultural rights might also improve the enjoyment of women's civil and political rights. For example, measures supporting the formation of trade unions by women could have flow-on effects in advancing their freedom of expression and right to take part in the conduct of public affairs.

Discrimination in the public and private spheres

31. Discrimination against women takes place not only in the public but also in the private domain. The private sphere includes the family, domestic unit or other interpersonal relationships, whether or not the same residence is shared. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/104, originally referred to the elimination of violence against women in the private life (art. 1) or by a private actor (art. 4). The

[24] CEDAW/C/2004/I/WP.1, para. 25.

scope has evolved; more recently, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in relation to article 10, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, highlighted the duty of States parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate violence against men and women by "private actors".[25]

32. Since it is in the private sphere that some women may be rendered most vulnerable and unprotected, the State is obliged to act with due diligence by providing adequate, effective and prompt responses to violations. This duty involves prevention, investigation, mediation, punishment and redress of human rights violations, and the obligation to prevent impunity. The Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment has addressed the situation of "powerlessness" as a critical element to bear in mind when considering the private sphere, a consideration no less pertinent for economic, social and cultural rights.[26] Indeed, the degree of powerlessness of a person in the private sphere might not only be the result of discrimination but also lead to further discrimination. Violence and discrimination against women can threaten the rights to health, housing and privacy at home. If a woman cannot own, rent or use adequate housing independently of a spouse or male relative, she might lack the freedom to leave a situation of domestic violence.[27]

33. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has also emphasized the need to combat discrimination in the private sphere, and explicitly stated, in its general comment No. 20, that it is the States parties' obligation to ensure non-discrimination against women in laws and practice. States must also protect women from acts or omissions committed by public authorities, the judiciary, organizations, enterprises or private individuals, in the public or private spheres, by means of competent tribunals, sanctions and other remedies.

34. Since the private sphere is also where critical choices are made about reproductive health, the call by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on States parties to elaborate and implement national sexual and reproductive health programmes, ensuring women's rights on an equal footing with men's, is specifically relevant. The Committee has linked the lack of education in this domain and of information on contraceptives, or to their access, to the use of abortion as a means of family planning. It has advocated for sexual and reproductive health education programmes as a way to lower female mortality rates caused by illegal or unsafe abortions.[28]

[25] See E/C.12/2005/4, para. 27.

[26] In his report (A/HRC/7/3), the Special Rapporteur discusses some forms of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment such as domestic violence, human trafficking, rape, violence against pregnant women and female genital mutilation, all directly related to one or several economic, social and cultural rights.

[27] The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará) establishes that the due diligence obligation has a special connotation in cases of violence against women. For jurisprudence, see, for example, IACHR, Merits, report N° 54/01, Maria Da Penha Fernandes (Brazil), 16 April 2001.

[28] See E/C.12/1/Add.85, para. 53; E/C.12/1/Add.96, para. 50; E/C.12/1/Add.78, paras. 23 and 42; and E/C.12/MEX/CO/4, paras. 25 and 43.

Non-State actors

35. When addressing discriminatory and unequal policies and practices, the States parties' obligation to monitor and regulate the conduct of non-State actors is paramount. While many actors fall into this broad category, for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, some of the more commonly relevant are employers and other individuals in the workplace, health workers and professionals, teachers and administrative personnel in educational settings,[29] individuals in the private sphere, or other actors, such as corporations, where public services have been partially or fully privatized.

36. Incidentally, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has urged State parties to encourage all actors responsible for having directly or indirectly caused a health crisis by poisoning water resources with arsenic to share in the financial burden of compensating victims. The Committee requested that measures be put in place to ensure that safe drinking water was available to all and particularly to affected rural women and their families; that a plan of action containing preventative and remedial measures be prepared without delay; and that an awareness-raising campaign on health, nutrition and social programmes in relation to the water pollution be launched.[30]

Access to justice

37. The historic neglect in ensuring legal protection of economic, social and cultural rights, including the provision of remedies determined and enforced by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, has been slowly declining at the national and international levels. In this regard, the prohibition of discrimination based on sex is an area which clearly lends itself to legal protection through tribunals. Nonetheless, while women in theory should be able to have access to an appropriate remedy in proved cases of discrimination, formal equality in law has not automatically been matched by equal access to justice.

38. In two reports, the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights conducted an analysis of access to justice for women victims of violence and access to justice as a guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights in the region.[31] The Commission noted that the State must not only avoid obstructing access by women to independent bodies and effective remedies, it also has a positive duty to organize the institutional apparatus to ensure access without discrimination in relation to all rights, which requires the removal of any regulatory, social or economic obstacles preventing or hindering access to justice by any group or individual in society. This

[29] The Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its general comment No. 3 (2003), refers to "in the home, in school or in the community".

[30] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/59/38), para. 260.

[31] IACHR, "Access to justice for women victims of violence in the Americas" (20 January 2007), OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc.68, and "Access to justice as a guarantee of economic, social and cultural rights. A review of standards adopted by the Inter-American System of Human Rights" (7 September 2007), OEA/Ser.L/V/II.129/Doc.4/2007. The former report addresses how national legislation, policies and courts, as well as the inter-American human rights system, have incorporated international human rights standards, particularly those set by the Convention Belém do Pará and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The latter report includes examples where discrimination based on sex was explicitly addressed by the Commission and the Court.

is precisely why women are often left unprotected or even worse, why they do not seek remedies or redress. Obstacles are multiple, frequently intertwined with regulatory complications, social or cultural prejudices, lack of targeted provisions and discriminatory practices that have seldom been challenged, including subtle forms of discrimination sometimes borne out in irregular conduct of investigations of cases, flaws or delays in prosecution and punishment, and ineffective or delayed implementation of administrative remedies.

III. Women's economic, social and cultural rights in post-conflict societies

39. In section II of the present report, a general conceptual and legal framework highlighting the particular ways in which women have been disproportionately affected by violations of economic, social and cultural rights as a result of discrimination is discussed. Section III serves as a case study in post-conflict transition.

40. In a previous report (A/HRC/4/62), the need to integrate economic, social and cultural rights in the political, legal and social edifice of societies having experienced conflict was emphasized. The paragraphs below complement that analysis by considering women's economic, social and cultural rights based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, bearing in mind that women's vulnerability to social and economic deprivation is usually deepened further in conflict and post-conflict situations.

41. If women have been victims of deeply rooted patterns of discrimination in societies at peace, the violations they often face are multiplied in societies in conflict. Previously existing discrimination based on gender, which violates women's economic, social and cultural rights, such as lack of access to education and social security, lack of adequate food, health care and housing, the inability to legally own or inherit property, is generally exacerbated during conflict. For example, while women continue to carry the disproportionate burden of domestic work, their unpaid labour becomes more complex and demanding in times of war, when they take on the additional role of head of household, substituting absent men. Public services are often hit hardest by conflict, and women spend longer hours carrying water, caring for children who no longer have a school to go to or for the sick in the absence of health services.[32] Moreover, women and children constitute over 80 per cent of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons.

42. As a result, these inequities, compounded by the violations of human rights experienced during the conflict, including rape, gender-based violence, abductions, forced marriages, forced labour and displacement, render the protection of women's economic, social and cultural rights an imperative consideration after war. In post-conflict situations, some of the major obstacles to the fulfilment of women's economic and social empowerment, in particular in the light of their new roles within families, might include the lack of access to land, legal ownership over or inheritance of housing and property, and the lack of access to adequate food, health care and justice.

[32] United Nations Development Fund for Women, "Women, War and Peace" (2002).

43. The relevance of focusing on women's economic, social and cultural rights emerges at various stages of post-conflict transition: during peace negotiations, during transitional justice processes, and during the early recovery, reconstruction and reintegration phases. An analysis of the violations of economic, social and cultural rights that might have disproportionately affected women and the root causes of the conflict that might have exacerbated the impact of such violations can make an important contribution to ensuring a durable and relevant response to post-conflict reconstruction.

Peace agreements

44. Peace agreements formally end armed conflict and provide the framework for the reconstruction of political, legal, economic and social structures, as well as promote equality between men and women as a means towards creating a stable and peaceful society. Peace agreements are also the basis for post-conflict legal and institutional arrangements, in which the reflection of gender-specific consequences of armed conflict and the priorities of women, including in relation to their economic, social and cultural rights, need to be reflected. Peace agreements, however, commonly include provisions with regard to political and legal security and relevant civil and political rights, but rarely address economic, social and cultural rights. Given that the rights fundamental to underpinning women's equality and non-discrimination and essential to pursue rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction are neglected, the sustainability of such agreements can be undermined.

45. Peace agreements should ensure substantive equality for women and end discriminatory practices against them, including temporary special measures, to develop a just and equal society with security and protection for women and men. Ideally, peace agreements should not only ensure women's equitable participation in democratic and policy processes in post-conflict societies, but also prescribe increases in budgetary allocations towards the attainment of economic, social and cultural rights for women to redress pre-conflict inequalities or inequality resulting from the conflict. In this context, a report of an expert group meeting organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women recommends that a national post-conflict socio-economic profile with sex-disaggregated data should form the basis for the development of socio-economic policies and programmes aimed at protecting the rights to health, education, an adequate standard of living, land and property, work, social security and nationality.[33]

Transitional justice

46. A focus on women's economic, social and cultural rights in transitional justice processes has been largely absent. However, given that social injustice is often a crucial factor leading to conflict and that conflicts aggravate social injustice, particularly through violations of women's economic, social and cultural rights, transitional justice processes must address these violations if they are to meet their purpose of facilitating the transformation of oppressed societies into free ones.

[33] Division for the Advancement of Women, report of the expert group meeting on peace agreements as a means for promoting gender equality and ensuring participation of women: a framework for model provisions, 2003, prepared by Christine Chinkin (EGM/PEACE/2003/BP.11).

47. Addressing violations of women's economic, social and cultural rights is implicit in the principles driving transitional justice processes. In 2005, the General Assembly, in its resolution 60/147, adopted the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law. These principles and guidelines refer to core international human rights instruments[34] where economic, social and cultural rights are included, and provide for their application and interpretation without discrimination on any grounds.

48. For the purpose of the guidelines, victims are defined in a comprehensive manner, covering those who have suffered violations of economic, social and cultural rights they are "persons who individually or collectively suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that constitute gross violations of international human rights law, or serious violations on international humanitarian law" (annex, para. 8).

49. When characterizing reparations, according to the principles and guidelines, they must be "adequate, effective and prompt", and include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition. Since each of these forms of reparation implies considerations of one or various economic, social and cultural rights, it is critical to guarantee that such deliberations are made with the aim of ensuring equality of men and women and non-discrimination based on sex.

50. Even if a uniform and expansive definition of "victim" were adopted, it would not settle the critical question of how to select human rights violations subject to reparations. This is particularly relevant to avoid neglect of women's economic, social and cultural rights. Considering diverse examples of reparation programmes to date, a study by OHCHR has indicated that no programme has explained why the victims of some violations were eligible for reparations while others were not. Not surprisingly, and at least in part as a consequence of this omission, most programmes have ignored types of violations that perhaps could and should have been included. Since these exclusions have affected women and marginalized groups disproportionately, the mere requirement to articulate the principles, or at least the grounds for selecting the violation of some rights and not others, is likely to remedy at least the more gratuitous exclusions.[35]

51. The High Commissioner has previously highlighted the importance of including violations of economic, social and cultural rights in the investigations of truth and reconciliation commissions with a view to achieving social justice for men and women.[36] Practice shows, however, that not only are truth commissions falling

[34] Specifically, the guidelines refer to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

[35] OHCHR, Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States, reparations programmes (2008), pp. 21, 31, 32 and 36. Available at the OHCHR website www.ohchr.org (accessed 14 May 2008).

[36] See, for example, Arbour, Louise, "Economic and social justice for societies in transition". Second annual transitional justice lecture hosted by the New York University of Law Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and by the International Center for Transitional Justice, 25 October 2006, New York University School of Law.

short of addressing economic, social and cultural rights of women, they are also falling short of fully addressing these rights more generally. For example, when truth commissions have actually investigated violations of such rights, they generally fall short of proposing reparations to redress documented violations. The Timor-Leste commission, which investigated economic, social and cultural rights violations in great detail, decided not to regard victims of violations of these rights as beneficiaries for reparation for reasons of feasibility and needs-based prioritization.[37] Likewise, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Peru investigated human rights violations specifically affecting women by State and non-State actors, with inclusion of economic, social and cultural rights, particularly of rural women and girls, but failed to propose adequate reparations.[38]

Reconstruction

52. During conflict, women are not only victims of human rights violations: in the absence of men, they are also often faced with new roles and responsibilities. Often, however, women and their rights — and most frequently their economic, social and cultural rights — are excluded or overlooked during reconstruction.

53. An equitable, non-discriminatory post-conflict constitutional, legal and policy framework is an important component of the reconstruction of post-conflict societies. Such a framework ought to include provisions to promote equality in the areas of access to land and resources; inheritance and the right to own property; sexual and reproductive health; social security; and worker rights and education. Specific policies and practices of discrimination against women, regardless of whether they pre-date the conflict, are unlikely to end with a formal ceasefire, and will therefore need to be addressed comprehensively in the early recovery phase. One good example can be found in Rwanda, where women's rights to inheritance and to own property were guaranteed for the first time in laws adopted after the conflict.

54. Beyond laws, the protection of women's economic, social and cultural rights in post-conflict transition should be taken into account when rebuilding public services, such as water, sewage, schools or hospitals. A conscious effort will need to be made to address the specific health-care needs of women, such as treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS and other physical or mental consequences of gender-based violence.[33] Many post-conflict programmes tend to focus solely on rehabilitating former combatants, overlooking the discriminatory impact of a reduction in work opportunities for women in formal and informal economic activities. In addition, positive measures must be taken upon return to protect and ensure equality for "camp-followers" and women, including girls, who have been abducted during conflict.

55. A critical issue for restitution programmes is the return to land. The principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and internally displaced persons (the "Pinheiro principles")[39] have provided guidance in several post-conflict

[37] Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste, final report, part 11: recommendations, pp. 40-41 (see www.ictj.org).

[38] International Center for Transitional Justice, *What Happened to the Women? Gender and Reparations for Human Rights Violations*, edited by Ruth Rubio-Marin (2006), chap. 3.

[39] See E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/17. These principles were endorsed by the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, on 11 August 2005.

societies such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Guatemala, the Sudan and Uganda.[40] Principle 4 addresses the need to ensure equality between men and women with regard to voluntary return, legal security of tenure, property ownership, equal access to inheritance and use, and control of and access to housing, land and property. Concretely, widows have returned to their original homes after a conflict only to find them occupied by male members of the deceased husband's family who claim rights based on prevailing customary regimes. Such discriminatory practices have severe consequences for women and can lead to homelessness and landlessness, general housing and food insecurity, increased vulnerability to violence and social isolation.[40] States must therefore take action to address both formal and customary laws, as well as practices entrenching unequal inheritance and land rights for women.

IV. Concluding remarks

56. Women suffer disproportionally from inequality and discrimination in the protection and enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights. There is still a pervasive gap between de jure and de facto discrimination against women, often concealed in relation to economic, social and cultural rights. The private sphere continues to impose norms, rules and practices that prevent the enjoyment by women of all ages of their rights, in developed and developing societies alike. Both direct and indirect discrimination continues to be widespread, despite the adoption, decades ago, of international human rights norms that prohibit discrimination against women in the realm of economic, social and cultural rights.

57. In post-conflict transition, ensuring meaningful participation by women and women's organizations and the inclusion of specific concerns in relation to women's economic, social and cultural rights is paramount. In the design of legislation, programmes and policies at all levels, a human rights approach increases the likelihood that women's rights will be best served by any measure adopted. Post-conflict societies must make an effort to incorporate measures founded on equality between women and men and non-discrimination against women in the realm of economic, social and cultural rights, in order to redress conflict-related violations, build sustainable peace and rectify prior inequalities.

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[40] For more details, see the handbook "Housing and Property Restitution For Refugees and Displaced Persons" (2007), jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OHCHR, UN-Habitat and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).